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# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

## THESIS

**THE ROLE OF THE “HISTORY ISSUE” IN SINO-  
JAPANESE RELATIONS (1972–2016)**

by

Elizabeth Pham

March 2017

Thesis Advisor:  
Second Reader:

Michael A. Glosny  
Robert J. Weiner

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**THE ROLE OF THE “HISTORY ISSUE” IN SINO-JAPANESE RELATIONS  
(1972–2016)**

Elizabeth Pham  
Major, United States Marine Corps  
B.A., University of San Diego, 2000

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES  
(FAR EAST, SOUTHEAST ASIA, THE PACIFIC)**

from the

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## **ABSTRACT**

Relations between China and Japan suffer under the “history issue,” an inability to reconcile these nations’ relative perspectives on past wartime events. With emphasis on China’s construction of the history issue, this thesis analyzes when and why China calls particular attention to Japan’s past aggression and the degree to which China’s actions have impacted bilateral relations from 1972 to 2016. Using elements from collective memory, national identity, and balance of power theories, this thesis makes four main arguments. First, provocative Japanese behavior revives the collective memories of past trauma and provokes criticism of Japanese politics. Second, when China perceives threats from Japan, it highlights Japan’s past atrocities and lack of contrition to contain Japan’s ambitions or gain relative power. Third, when collective memory is the main driver in shaping relations, balance of power plays a more supporting role and vice versa. Last, the public’s collective memory and the volatile activation of the public’s genuine anti-Japanese sentiments were the strongest factors in explaining the downturn of relations. As the United States implements its security strategy in East Asia, understanding historical disputes and their implications on the security status of the region is crucial, as they will affect agreements with our allies.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACW	abandoned chemical weapons
ADIZ	air-defense identification zone
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASDF	air self-defense force
BMD	ballistic missile defense
CASS	Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
CCG	Chinese Coast Guard
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CMS	Chinese maritime surveillance
CWC	chemical weapons convention
DPJ	Democratic Party of Japan
ECS	East China Sea
EEZ	exclusive economic zone
FDI	foreign direct investment
GDP	gross domestic product
JASDF	Japanese air self-defense force
KMT	Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party)
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
MIRV	multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOU	memorandum of understanding
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NPC	National People's Congress
ODA	official developmental assistance
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PLAFF	People's Liberation Army Air Force
PLAN	People's Liberation Army Navy
PPP	purchasing-power parity
PRC	People's Republic of China
SDF	self-defense force

TMD	theater missile defense
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWII	World War II

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family. I love and cherish being part of your lives, and I love you more than anything this world could ever offer. I look forward to the next adventure in our lives.

# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. RESEARCH QUESTION AND MAIN FINDINGS

China harbors painful memories of invasion and occupation by foreign countries, and these recollections make China highly insecure and constantly on guard to challenge any perceived intrusions from outsiders. The Chinese government assumes that foreigners always have a suppressed desire to control, coerce, and threaten Chinese sovereignty and that this desire might break forth, as it did in China's "century of humiliation."<sup>1</sup> China is particularly acute to Japanese actions due to Japan's harsh occupations in the 19th and 20th centuries, the proximity of the two countries, and the perceived offensive presumptuousness of Japan, which was once a student of Chinese culture and a lesser tributary state in a Sino-centric world.<sup>2</sup> Relations between China and Japan suffer under the "history issue," an inability to reconcile their relative perspectives on events that happened in the 19th century and early 20th century, including World War II (WWII).<sup>3</sup> China continually brings international attention to Japan's brutal history in Asia and scrutinizes current Japanese statements and activities for evidence of renewed aggression. Japan rejects China's interpretations of past events and refuses to satisfy

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<sup>1</sup> The Chinese century of humiliation or China's 100 years of national humiliation refer to the time period of 1839 to 1949. It begins with the First Opium War and ends with the founding of the People's Republic of China under Chinese Communist Party (CCP) rule led by Mao Zedong. During this time, China was plagued with foreign invasion, various wars with the Western powers (namely the First and Second Opium Wars), forced "unequal treaties," divided spheres of influence by other nations, domestic uprisings and rebellions, civil war, and occupation by the Japanese. This time also includes the first Sino-Japanese War from 1894 to 1895 that ended with the Treaty of Shimonoseki and the Second Sino-Japanese War from 1937 to 1945 (the Marco Polo Bridge Incident to the end of World War II). From 1945 to 1949, China reengaged in a brutal civil war that was finally won by the CCP as the victors over the Kuomintang (KMT) or Chinese Nationalist Party, whose leadership was exiled to Taiwan. The "century of humiliation" is quoted by Zheng on page 66. Zheng Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 49–68, 74, 84.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Hays Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 38–39, 70–71, 92.

<sup>3</sup> The "history issue" is a well-known statement that many authors describe as China and Japan's conflict over each other's diverging memory and interpretation of the wartime history between both nations. Zheng Wang, "History Education: The Source of Conflict between China and Japan: Current Tensions between China and Japan Have Their Roots in Different Approaches to History Education," *Diplomat*, April 23, 2014, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/04/history-education-the-source-of-conflict-between-china-and-japan/>.



China's demands that it acquiesce to China's version of the facts and apologize accordingly. The history issue conflict stems from a discrepancy in how China and Japan view their shared history. China remembers a cavalcade of traumatic events and keeps them alive, while Japan chooses to forget, downplay, or justify its offenses. This discord creates significant and intractable problems in the Sino-Japanese relationship.

China has found it difficult, and perhaps inconvenient, to move beyond resentment. China mistrusts Japanese ambitions, whether for stronger influence in Asia, greater security and projection of military capability, or economic power. Chinese rancor focuses on Tokyo's reluctance to demonstrate satisfactory remorse in writing, make reparations, and educate the Japanese people about their shameful past. China has used propaganda to exacerbate the history issue, inflaming anti-Japanese fervor to gain support for the Communist regime, justify territorial aggression, and ratify policy decisions in the court of public opinion. Chinese elites have used history as a coercive tactic to persuade the masses, refine the collective memory, and promote nationalism. Yet sometimes the tool may switch hands—public demonstrations demanding the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) punish Tokyo may influence China's domestic and international policies despite reluctance from Beijing.<sup>4</sup>

Japan has no apparent wish to rehash its militaristic past. Many Japanese believe their country's oppressive and hostile conduct in Asia and the Pacific was perpetrated by a militaristic elite who dominated events and manipulated the people into war.<sup>5</sup> Japanese leaders argue that the apologies and concessions they have made in the past have been

---

<sup>4</sup> James Reilly makes a similar argument in his book, in which he states that there is a “cyclical model of state-society interactions, demonstrating that the Chinese government has developed a mechanism for tolerating and responding to sporadic instances of public emotion while maintaining its overall foreign policy trajectory” (pages 4–5). James Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State: The Rise of Public Opinion on China's Japan Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 1–6; Gries, *China's New Nationalism*, 18–20, 87–90.

<sup>5</sup> Akiko Hashimoto, *The Long Defeat: Cultural Trauma, Memory, and Identity in Japan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 16, 58–59.

sufficient and condign, and that under their strict “peace constitution” and careful reforms, renewed Japanese aggression is impossible.<sup>6</sup>

China interprets Japan’s reluctance to review its military history as proof of Japan’s inherent aspirations to escape the strictures of its peace constitution, expand its maritime self-defense roles, restore nationalism, contain China, and overpower Asia.<sup>7</sup> Hence, China uses the “history card” in the international arena to spotlight, exaggerate, or even fabricate past events and present terrors. Japan’s historical brutalities give China a claim to the moral high ground and a platform from which to coerce sympathy from powerful states. The quality of Sino-Japanese relations for the past 44 years has varied widely in correspondence with China’s deployment or withholding of the history card.

China may withhold the history card if more pressing concerns, such as economic cooperation with Japan, environmental policies, and humanitarian assistance, take priority. At such times, Sino-Japanese relations generally improve and mutually beneficial outcomes may be achieved. However, this cooperation has proven temporary over time. The history issue has a life of its own—nurtured, trained, and unleashed at Beijing’s discretion. When Beijing perceives a threat to its national interests, Sino-Japanese relations are among the first casualties.<sup>8</sup>

This thesis focuses on China’s strategic use of the history issue from 1972 to 2016 to examine three key questions:

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<sup>6</sup> Hashimoto, *The Long Defeat*, 57–60, 63, 99–102; 2015 marked the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II in the Pacific. In a public speech that was broadcasted internationally, Japan’s prime minister Shinzo Abe stated that “we have created a free and democratic country, abided by the rule of law, and consistently upheld that pledge never to wage a war again. . . Japan has repeatedly expressed the feelings of deep remorse and heartfelt apology for its actions during the war. . . Such position articulated by the previous cabinets will remain unshakable into the future. . . We must not let our children, grandchildren, and even further generations to come, who have nothing to do with that war, be predestined to apologize.” Shinzo Abe, “Statement by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe,” August 14, 2015, [http://japan.kantei.go.jp/97\\_abe/statement/201508/0814statement.html](http://japan.kantei.go.jp/97_abe/statement/201508/0814statement.html).

<sup>7</sup> Thomas J. Christensen, “China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia,” *International Security* 23, no. 4 (1999): 52–58, 78–80.

<sup>8</sup> Susan L. Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 158–160, 167–168; Ming Wan, *Sino-Japanese Relations: Interaction, Logic, and Transformation* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2006), 17–31.

1. What is the reason China continues to play the history card, knowing that it degrades beneficial Sino-Japanese relations and increases regional conflict?
2. What triggers China's use of the history card?
3. What are the policy implications for the history issue for Japanese and U.S. planners?

This thesis posits two explanations as to when, why, and how China uses its historical grievances against Japan and to what degree these accounts have contributed to negative bilateral relations. The first explanation is that China's collective remembrance of its traumatic history with Japan is a deeply ingrained aspect of society and culture with significant political implications. Provocative Japanese actions, related to history, reignite the public's anti-Japanese sentiments and can force Beijing to harden its policies with Japan and force Japan to take actions to appease the Chinese public or acquiesce to Chinese government demands. The second explanation is that Chinese elites use the history issue cynically to justify domestic and security policies, manipulate Japanese actions, and mold international opinion to contain Japanese influence in the region. When China feels threatened by Japan's rising influence in the region, it will use history to contain Japan or gain an advantage in the balance of power against its rival.

This thesis determines that a combination of both collective remembrance and balance of power explanations contribute to the downturn of bilateral relations, as neither variable can solely explain why relations suffered. Throughout the varying periods of Sino-Japanese discord, both Chinese society's bitterness regarding its history with Japan and Beijing's use of the country's historical trauma for realpolitik reasons significantly contributed to explaining the downturn in relations—with one sometimes playing a greater role than the other. However, China's use of the history issue to gain power over Japan stems from its remembrance of its collective experience. Thus, further analysis concludes that the public's collective memory and the volatile activation of the public's genuine anti-Japanese sentiments were the strongest factors in explaining the downturn of relations. Sino-Japanese ties were the most discordant when the Chinese public's anti-

Japanese sentiments over the history issue played the more substantial role. Furthermore, when collective remembrance was the more apparent driver, the government was initially motivated to take action to appease its domestic constituency and then capitalized on the people's genuine sentiments to contain Japan's ambitions for power. When the government's promulgation of history to restrain Japan's ambitions or to justify policies to gain power over Japan was the more apparent driver, the public's collective remembrance was less overt, but still an underlying factor. When the Chinese elites played a stronger role in using historical grievances to contain Japan, the government satiated popular public demands for a hardened policy against its rival and preemptively avoided national uprisings that could force Beijing's hands in its foreign policy with Japan. The Chinese government cannot conveniently dismiss nor separate the deeply entrenched past trauma of its people from its foreign policy with Japan. Thus, Chinese motivations to highlight Japanese atrocities were mainly driven by the deeply embedded resentment of Japan's brutal aggression in Asia. China's use of its historical trauma to improve its power position was a close second.

## **B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY**

China and Japan are the two leading powers in East Asia, and their relationship colors the economics and security of the entire region. They are the second and third economies (respectively) in the world, based on nominal gross domestic product (GDP).<sup>9</sup> China absorbs over 18 percent of Japan's exported capital goods, which have risen an average of 10 to 17 percent per year since 2000.<sup>10</sup> On a global scale, China controls

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<sup>9</sup> Before this, Japan had been the number two economy since 1968, second to the United States. Japan's economic decline due to its stagnating economy and low growth rate has plagued the country for the last two decades. Tomoko A. Hosaka, "China Surpasses Japan as World's No. 2 Economy," *Washington Post*, August 17, 2010, [www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/08/15/AR2010081503697.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/08/15/AR2010081503697.html).

<sup>10</sup> Park Bun-Soon, "Northeast Asia's Economic Integration into China," *SERI Quarterly* 4, no. 2 (2011): 14; "Japan Exports 1963–2016," Trading Economics, accessed June 8, 2016, [www.tradingeconomics.com/japan/exports](http://www.tradingeconomics.com/japan/exports).

nearly a fifth of the world's GDP and has overtaken the United States as the number one economy in terms of purchasing-power parity (PPP).<sup>11</sup>

The volatility of Sino-Japanese relations puts economic investment, particularly that of Japan and the United States, at risk. Conflicts between the powers may yield severe disruptions that threaten maritime trade routes and undermine economic cooperation.

China is not the only wielder of history in this relationship. Japan also has interpreted historical events in a deliberate manner to flatter its national self-image, renew desired forms of nationalism, and secure public support for more hawkish domestic policies. The competing and irreconcilable interpretations of history promoted by China and Japan have injected animosity, suspicion, and unrest into territorial disputes and led to military posturing, failed connections, and instability in the region.<sup>12</sup>

Because China's resentments are useful to Beijing, they are relevant and will remain so indefinitely. The history issue has formalized in China through an anti-Japanese educational program that has helped prop up the CCP rule and justify its policies.<sup>13</sup> For Japan, the domestic whitewashing of its historical militarism has been

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<sup>11</sup> "China: Share of Global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Adjusted for Purchasing-Power-Parity (PPP) from 2010 to 2021," Statista, accessed June 8, 2016, [www.statista.com/statistics/270439/chinas-share-of-global-gross-domestic-product-gdp/](http://www.statista.com/statistics/270439/chinas-share-of-global-gross-domestic-product-gdp/); Wayne Morrison, *China's Economic Rise: History, Trends, Challenges, and Implications for the United States* (CSR Report No. RL33534) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2015), 1, 9–10, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33534.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> Yinan He, "Comparing Post-War (West) German-Polish and Sino-Japanese Reconciliation: A Bridge Too Far?" *Europe-Asia Studies* 63, no. 7 (2011): 1157–1165, 1177–1190 doi: 10.1080/09668136.2011.592266; "Forty Years in Paradox: Post-Normalisation Sino-Japanese Relations," *China Perspectives* 4, (December 2013): 7–8, 10–11, 15, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/1470088567?accountid=12702>; Yinan He, "Ripe for Cooperation or Rivalry? Commerce, Realpolitik, and War Memory in Contemporary Sino-Japanese Relations," *Asian Security* 4, no. 2 (2008): 162, 164, 174–177, 185–188, doi: 10.1080/14799850802006522.

<sup>13</sup> Christensen, "Security Dilemma in East Asia," 54; Zheng Wang discusses the patriotic education campaign and the century of humiliation and how they are rooted in anti-Japanese rhetoric and used as propaganda to strengthen CCP regime legitimacy after the Tiananmen Square Incident. Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 95–117, 126–132; He, "Forty Years in Paradox," 12; He, "Ripe for Cooperation," 176–177.

used to secure support for collective-defense initiatives, neo-nationalism, and military expansion.<sup>14</sup>

Since the end of WWII, U.S. presence in Asia has been a priority for the U.S. security strategy. U.S. troops and military capabilities stationed overseas have had a strategic mission to promote order, prevent future large-scale wars, and mitigate aggression. Perhaps this has helped mitigate the escalation of conflict in the region. Moreover, the U.S. agreement to protect Japan under its security umbrella directly ties Japanese domestic and international politics to America's security strategy. Thus, it is advisable for the United States to encourage positive Sino-Japanese relations to promote regional stability and lessen the requirement for U.S. involvement in conflict mediation.<sup>15</sup>

In 2011, President Barack Obama announced his intentions to strengthen U.S. involvement in the Asia-Pacific region—an agenda that has been reaffirmed by the current U.S. administration.<sup>16</sup> The pivoting or rebalancing of U.S. security and economic policies focused on Asia, against the backdrop of a rising and more assertive China, has presented significant implications for the stability of the region. Disruptive Sino-Japanese relations could potentially hinder U.S. desires to peacefully increase U.S. influence in the area. China may see increased U.S. involvement under this rebalancing as a way to control China's rise in power, economic growth, greater clout in the international arena, and increased assertiveness in the sovereignty of sea lanes—all of which China sees as potential threats to its regional interests. Perhaps China is more resistant to increasing

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<sup>14</sup> Hashimoto, *The Long Defeat*, 124–131.

<sup>15</sup> Mark E. Manyin, Stephen Daggett, Ben Dolven, Susan V. Lawrence, Michael F. Martin, Ronald O'Rourke, and Bruce Vaughn, *Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama Administration's "Rebalancing" toward Asia* (CRS Report No. 42448) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2012), 2; Banning Garrett and Bonnie Glaser, "Chinese Apprehension about Revitalization of the U.S.-Japan Alliance," *Asian Survey* 37, no. 4 (April 1997): 383–386; Christensen, "Security Dilemma in East Asia," 78–80.

<sup>16</sup> Manyin et al., *Pivot to the Pacific?* 1–2; Ayako Mie, "Trump Ramps Up Efforts to Reassure Japan with Phone Call from New Top U.S. Diplomat," *Japan Times*, February 7, 2017, [www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/02/07/national/politics-diplomacy/trump-ramps-efforts-reassure-japan-phone-call-new-top-u-s-diplomat/?utm\\_source=Daily+News+Updates&utm\\_campaign=37ddb71d47-Tuesday\\_email\\_updates08\\_02\\_2017&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_c5a6080d40-37ddb71d47-333347257#.WJt\\_abYrLow](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/02/07/national/politics-diplomacy/trump-ramps-efforts-reassure-japan-phone-call-new-top-u-s-diplomat/?utm_source=Daily+News+Updates&utm_campaign=37ddb71d47-Tuesday_email_updates08_02_2017&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c5a6080d40-37ddb71d47-333347257#.WJt_abYrLow); Reiji Yoshida, "Abe, Mattis Reaffirm Ties on Defense," *Japan Times*, February 3, 2017, [www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/02/03/national/politics-diplomacy/shinzo-abe-james-mattis-u-s-japan-bilateral-ties-defense/#.WJuA8bYrLow](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/02/03/national/politics-diplomacy/shinzo-abe-james-mattis-u-s-japan-bilateral-ties-defense/#.WJuA8bYrLow).

U.S.-Japanese influence because it perceives this alliance as threatening to its interests in the area. Regardless, Japan is the United States' strongest ally in the region, and positive Sino-Japanese relations are pivotal to U.S. interests in East Asia.<sup>17</sup>

This rising tension between China, Japan, and the United States has resulted in increased military incidents in the region. In 2015, the U.S. Navy exercised its freedom of navigation rights and nuclear-powered carrier operations around the South China Sea in response to China's territorial claims around the Spratly Islands.<sup>18</sup> In April 2016, the Defense Ministry of Japan announced that Japan's Self-Defense Air Force had scrambled fighter-attack jets over 571 times to intercept Chinese and Russian air forces during fiscal year 2015, a record high that nearly exceeded yearly levels recorded during the Cold War.<sup>19</sup> More recently, on June 7, 2016, a Chinese fighter conducted unsafe and provoking air intercepts on a U.S. RC-135 reconnaissance plane flying over the East China Sea (ECS).<sup>20</sup>

China's increased show of air power, maritime capabilities, military training exercises, and outspoken territorial claims have escalated U.S. and Japanese military responses.<sup>21</sup> Sovereignty claims and territorial disputes in both the South and East China Seas have kept Sino-Japanese security tensions high and militaries on alert in East Asia.

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<sup>17</sup> Manyin et al., *Pivot to the Pacific?* 1.

<sup>18</sup> According to Weitz, "U.S. Navy conducted another of its regular freedom of navigation operations in the region. On October 27, the U.S. Navy destroyer USS Lassen sailed within 6–7 nautical miles of the artificial structures that China has created near the Spratly Islands over the last year." Richard Weitz, "U.S. Defense Secretary Details Response to China's Strategic Challenge," *China-US Focus*, November 13, 2015, [www.chinausfocus.com/peace-security/carter-details-u-s-response-to-chinas-strategic-challenge](http://www.chinausfocus.com/peace-security/carter-details-u-s-response-to-chinas-strategic-challenge).

<sup>19</sup> Kiyoshi Takenaka, "Japan Jet Scrambles against China Planes Double in January–March," *Reuters*, April 22, 2016, <http://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idAFKCN0XJ1EB>; "Japan Scrambled Fighters against China a Record 571 Times in Fiscal 2015," *Japan Times*, April 23, 2016, [www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/04/23/national/japan-scrambled-fighters-china-record-571-times-fiscal-2015/#.V1XPIZMrK1s](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/04/23/national/japan-scrambled-fighters-china-record-571-times-fiscal-2015/#.V1XPIZMrK1s); "Japan Jets Scramble at Cold-War Levels as Chinese and Russian Incursions Increase," *Telegraph*, April 15, 2015, [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/japan/11540903/Japan-jets-scramble-at-Cold-War-levels-as-Chinese-and-Russian-incursions-increase.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/japan/11540903/Japan-jets-scramble-at-Cold-War-levels-as-Chinese-and-Russian-incursions-increase.html).

<sup>20</sup> Franz-Stefan Gady, "Chinese Fighter Conducts 'Unsafe' Intercept of US Spy Plane in East China Sea," *Diplomat*, June 8, 2016, <http://thediplomat.com/2016/06/chinese-fighter-conducts-unsafe-intercept-of-us-spy-plane-in-east-china-sea/>.

<sup>21</sup> Stratfor, "In the East China Sea, Beijing Tests Japan's Resolve," February 3, 2016, [www.stratfor.com/analysis/east-china-sea-beijing-tests-japans-resolve?0=ip\\_login\\_no\\_cache%3D3ce078564873f2f22e0929f81eb52e8f](http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/east-china-sea-beijing-tests-japans-resolve?0=ip_login_no_cache%3D3ce078564873f2f22e0929f81eb52e8f).

An official from China's Central Military Commission recently announced that rising tensions in the East and South China Seas, continuing U.S. rebalancing strategies, and the new U.S. administration's posture on Chinese affairs under President Donald Trump have made war a plausible reality.<sup>22</sup> Understanding the underlying tensions between China and Japan will better inform U.S. military planners on China's motives and desires in the region. As the United States implements military surge operations, restructures military base plans in Asia, and prepares contingency operation plans, the Department of Defense must understand state motivations and the underlying origins of potential conflict. Such knowledge will have implications both on the security status of the region and on how it will affect the agreements with our allies.

### C. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the immediate years after WWII, both China and Japan had higher priority domestic, economic, political, and security issues to resolve than the history issue. After the conflicts of the first half of the 20th century, China went through a period of isolation, famine, domestic strife, poor economic conditions, and geopolitical threats as it struggled to revitalize the country under its new Communist identity. At the same time, Japan was recovering from the damage, destruction, and defeat of the war under U.S. occupation. It was not until 1972, with the signing of the joint communiqué between China and Japan, that the history issue emerged. Initially, both nations attempted without success to resolve China's underlying bitter resentment of Japanese occupation during the war. However, the unsettled history issue remains a significant source of conflict in Sino-Japanese relations.<sup>23</sup>

The role of history in Sino-Japanese relations can be analyzed through various theoretical lenses, which have both domestic and international implications. Domestically, the history issue can be used as a propaganda tool by elites to influence the

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<sup>22</sup> Liu Zhen, "China 'Steps Up Preparedness for Possible Military Conflict with U.S.,'" January 27, 2017, *South China Morning Post*, [www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2065799/china-steps-preparedness-possible-military-conflict-us](http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2065799/china-steps-preparedness-possible-military-conflict-us).

<sup>23</sup> Michael Yahuda, *Sino-Japanese Relations after the Cold War: Two Tigers Sharing a Mountain* (London: Routledge, 2014), 2–6, 8–21.



masses and justify military expansion. The public could also use history to garner support to change policies at the highest levels of government. Internationally, the history issue has evolved to serve as a tool to challenge the international status quo or influence another state's domestic policy. For these reasons, this thesis will analyze China's remembrance of history and how it influences Sino-Japanese relations through the public's politicization of collective remembrance and the balance of power theory. These concepts will be used to assess trends as to when and why China brings to light the history issue and how this impacts Sino-Japanese relations.

### **1. Historical and Collective Remembrance in Shaping Identity, Public Opinion, and Nationalism**

This section reviews arguments regarding the roles of historical and collective remembrance in shaping a state's identity and creating a selective national narrative that promotes nationalism and influences public opinion. French social scientist Maurice Halbwachs holds that collective memory goes beyond recollections and instead represents "active selections and reconstructions" of a society's past.<sup>24</sup> Collective memory serves to discriminate among discourses to retain only the most valid, important, or meaningful to the group, which reinforces the legitimacy of personal experiences within a broader context of society and history. In turn, collective memories are preserved and kept alive to construct and reconstruct official narratives to bring meaning to the present. Thus, a society is bonded by its collective memory and the shared experiences that provide a foundation for the construction of an individual's identity.<sup>25</sup> Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz argue that historical remembrance and the act of selective remembering and forgetting have been increasingly politicized. Remembrance and memory in the political sphere evokes the public to recall its collective past, especially its shared traumatic experiences, to find meaning and power in the present—the power to heal, legitimize present actions, restore justice, or even instigate the call to

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<sup>24</sup> Erika Apfelbaum, "Halbwachs and the Social Properties of Memory," in *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates*, ed. Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 85.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 85–92.

war. They assert that personal and collective memories play a key role in the formation of state identities and cultural narratives in a “memory-politics nexus”<sup>26</sup> that uses the past to serve present interests. Radstone and Schwarz further argue that memories are not fixed but are rather shaped and reshaped as a result of the socialization of remembering and forgetting. The politicization of memory is an unstable phenomenon as a society’s memory evolves over time due to the variation of public interaction and interpretation. Thus, memory, especially the collective memory of a society, is inherently volatile and emotionally charged with changing reinterpretations of the past to serve present interests.<sup>27</sup>

Similarly, Eric Langenbacher discusses the role of collective experiences and passed-down memories in linking the past, present, and future, to evolve into a national identity that explains the bonds of societies. He further discusses the impact of traumatic collective memories, which scar the peaceful evolution of a society’s development and manifest into a national narrative that is resentful of its past, cautious of its present, and in constant need of ensuring the security of its future.<sup>28</sup>

#### *a. Chinese Identity*

Perhaps the traumatic collective remembrance of the Chinese people by Japanese imperialists has created a narrative of anti-Japanese identity. Shogo Suzuki, Zheng Wang, Peter Hays Gries, and James Reilly discuss a more constructivist view in regard to the collective memory and shared traumatic narrative of the Chinese people. These authors argue that the Chinese people are embodied with an anti-Japanese self-identity born into society at the start of the country’s sovereignty as a nation under CCP rule. They argue

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<sup>26</sup> The “memory-politics nexus” is the way in which memory interacts with the public and influences the politics of a society, culture, or state as a form of validation or acknowledgment of shared past trauma. It is “to a degree driven by the sufferings attendant upon the making of the modern, globalized world, encompassing instances where memory, as a site of social practice, has intensified.” Ibid., 3.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 1–4.

<sup>28</sup> Eric Langenbacher, “Collective Memory as a Factor in Political Culture and International Relations,” in *Power and the Past: Collective Memory and International Relations*, ed. Eric Langenbacher and Yossi Shain (Washington, DC.: Georgetown University Press, 2010), 21–26.

that this identity was preserved in the collective memories of the public's experience and culture during and after WWII.

Japan's role during WWII is poignantly remembered in Chinese society and serves as a psychological basis for why history is an issue to begin with. After five generations and a somewhat peaceful interlude of nearly 70 years, anti-Japanese attitudes still remain significant in China—this can explain why the public gives little resistance to the anti-Japanese rhetoric in Beijing's patriotic education campaign—perhaps it is a sentiment that is inherently felt by the society as a whole. Therefore, Chinese nationalism and the history issue is more than a tool that is used by ruling elites to control the masses and manipulate domestic and foreign gains. From this view, history is an intrinsic bitterness remaining within the psyche of the Chinese mind that drives policy in Beijing and sometimes requires the suppression of Chinese nationalists to ensure cooperation in Sino-Japanese relations. Hence, collective memory originates from the bottom up and shapes a society's identity and a state's nationalism, which influences decision making at the highest levels of government.<sup>29</sup>

Perhaps the Chinese public has embodied an identity and contentious narrative that was not only created by the people but shaped and controlled by the state to serve national interests. Yinan He and Zheng Wang also argue that the Chinese paradoxical identity as both a victim of Western imperialism and Japanese aggression and a victor over both historical intrusions was reinforced by a state controlled national narrative.<sup>30</sup> Yinan He describes China's anti-Japanese identity as a result of state-driven "national mythmaking" through China's reinterpretations of history.<sup>31</sup> She argues that this

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<sup>29</sup> Shogo Suzuki, "The Importance of 'Othering,' in China's National Identity: Sino-Japanese Relations as a Stage of Identity Conflicts," *Pacific Review* 20, no. 1 (March 2007): 23–29, 31–41, doi: 10.1080/09512740601133195; Zheng Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 20–32, 36–37, 47–69; Gries, *China's New Nationalism*, 36–40, 69–85; James Reilly, "Remember History, Not Hatred: Collective Remembrance of China's War of Resistance to Japan," *Modern Asian Studies* 45, no. 02, (March 2011): 465–468, doi:10.1017/S0026749X11000151.

<sup>30</sup> He, "Comparing Post-War (West) German-Polish and Sino-Japanese Reconciliation," 1157, 1160–1165, 1177–1178; Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 95–141.

<sup>31</sup> He, "Comparing Post-War (West) German-Polish and Sino-Japanese Reconciliation," 1157, 1176–1187.

mythmaking has created a “sense of innate superiority, inflame[d] mutual hatred and fear, and, as a result, worsen[ed] mutual misperception and justif[ied] bellicose policy demands.”<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, the globalization of China’s economy resulted in increasing international pressure for it to abide by Western standards and norms. Thus, adding to this anti-Japanese narrative has been a form of discrimination by Western democracies that has given rise to the sentiment that China “deserve[d] a much better fate than that which it ha[d] experienced in the modern world .”<sup>33</sup> As a result, China has taken on the identity that it is once again a victim of Western intrusion, an identity that hinders the resolution of continuing historical disputes between China and the West—and chiefly with Japan.

Similarly, James Reilly discusses how collective remembrance and historical narratives shape one’s identity, allow for societies to make sense of the world they live in, and are molded by the state.<sup>34</sup> The socially constructed narrative and selective remembrance of war events can potentially cause “contestation over historical experiences [as] the use of these memories [are manipulated for] political purposes.”<sup>35</sup> In addition, Reilly and Jay Winter argue that collective memories of trauma and war, embodied in public commemoration sites, have powerful tropes that bond generations to the history and struggles of the nation.<sup>36</sup> For both China and Japan, historical narratives are selectively chosen to promote state agendas, and they take the form of official commemorations, memorials, holidays, educational media, school textbooks, popular literature, films, and personal beliefs. Such rituals of remembrance are aimed at allowing

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<sup>32</sup> Yinan He, “History, Chinese Nationalism and the Emerging Sino-Japanese Conflict,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 16, no. 50 (March 2007): 3, doi:10.1080/10670560601026710.

<sup>33</sup> Steven I. Levine, “Perception and Ideology in Chinese Foreign Policy,” in *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*, ed. Thomas W. Robinson and David Shambaugh (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 43.

<sup>34</sup> Reilly, “Remember History, Not Hatred,” 464–468.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 466.

<sup>36</sup> Jay Winter, “Sites of Memory,” in *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates*, ed. Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 312–317, 319, 322, 324; Reilly, “Remember History, Not Hatred,” 465–468, 472–476.

the past to have a prescribed meaning in the present. Thus, collective memories become state-sponsored historical legacies and form the foundations of state nationalism.<sup>37</sup>

***b. Public Opinion and Nationalism***

Peter Hays Gries, James Reilly, Yinan He, Susan Shirk, and Jessica Chen Weiss have noted that collective memory and state endorsement of anti-Japanese sentiments have created a public atmosphere that has sometimes gone beyond the government's control or has forced the hand of diplomacy.<sup>38</sup> In China, popular nationalism has developed a life of its own, taking over state roles and anti-Japanese propaganda dissemination through social and cyber media venues. Public demands have been a "double-edged sword"<sup>39</sup> that has promoted state goals of pride, nationalism, and legitimacy of CCP, while at the same time these demands have undermined CCP's credibility to handle autonomously foreign policies to meet national objectives and brought rise to domestic unrest through public demonstrations and riots.<sup>40</sup> The rise of public opinion and nationalism can force the Chinese elites to take a hardened stance against Japan even if they do not believe it is in the best interest for the country. In many cases, the Chinese authoritarian government has had to carefully balance how much it allows and suppresses domestic public opinion and the rise of nationalism to ensure it placates the desires of its people while also implementing policies that serve national interests. Thus, anti-Japanese public opinion can block the CCP's attempts to garner

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<sup>37</sup> Reilly, "Remember History, Not Hatred," 465–490.

<sup>38</sup> Peter Hays Gries, "Nationalism and Chinese Foreign Policy," in *China Rising: Power and Motivation in Chinese Foreign Policy*, ed. Yong Deng and Fei-Ling Wang (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005) 112, 114, 115; Gries, *China's New Nationalism*, 116–134; James Reilly, "China's History Activists and the War of Resistance Against Japan: History in the Making," *Asian Survey*, 44, no. 2 (2004): 276–277, 280, 293–294, doi: 10.1525/as.2004.44.2.276. Reilly discusses China's history activists and how they have taken over the state's role in disseminating information on anti-Japanese propaganda. This may rouse or show that the CCP is not doing its job to satisfy the history issue as the people have taken upon themselves to put pressure the government of Japan; Reilly, "Remember History, Not Hatred," 472–480, 489–490; Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 3–6, 20, 37–53; He, "History, Chinese Nationalism," 2–3, 9–13, 16–24; Shirk, *Fragile Superpower*, 140–178; Jessica Chen Weiss, "Authoritarian Signaling, Mass Audiences, and Nationalist Protest in China," *International Organization* 67, no. 1 (Winter 2013): 1, 30–32, doi: 10.1017/S0020818312000380.

<sup>39</sup> He, "History, Chinese Nationalism," 22; Reilly, "Remember History, Not Hatred," 468.

<sup>40</sup> He, "History, Chinese Nationalism," 1–14; Shirk, *Fragile Superpower*, 140–146, 151–157; Suzuki, "The Importance of 'Othering,'" 26–28.

positive Sino-Japanese relations and increase the chance of bilateral conflict. Mark Selden argues “throughout the long 20th century, nationalism has everywhere been the handmaiden of war: war has provided a powerful stimulus to nationalism; nationalism has repeatedly led nations to war; and war memory is central to framing and fueling nationalist historical legacies.”<sup>41</sup> Thus, the rise of anti-Japanese public opinion, shaped from the collective memories of a nation’s traumatic past, can force a government’s hand to harden its international policies against past adversaries, even if it is not in the best interest for the country, and heighten the risk of conflict.<sup>42</sup>

## **2. Balance of Power in East Asia**

The rapid rise of China as a world power and the slow decline of Japan’s international economic influence after the end of the Cold War initiated a significant shift in the balance of power in Asia.<sup>43</sup> Aaron L. Friedberg, and Robert Gilpin discuss that when there are transitions in the balance of power between powerful states, the rising power has incentive to change the status quo to reflect the current reality of its newly found capability.<sup>44</sup> In striving to change the status quo, rising powers may forcibly coerce other states to behave in ways that acknowledge the newly found status of this rising power. In response to the newly capable power, neighboring states may have incentives to singularly or collectively take actions to prevent the ascent of this new power, thus forcibly protecting the status quo. In using this logic, the power transition between a

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<sup>41</sup> Mark Selden, “Japan, the United States and Yasukuni Nationalism,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 43, no. 45 (November 2008): 71, [www.jstor.org/stable/40278754](http://www.jstor.org/stable/40278754).

<sup>42</sup> Gries, “Nationalism and Chinese Foreign Policy,” 112, 114, 115; Gries, *China’s New Nationalism*, 116–134; Reilly, “China’s History Activists,” 276–277, 280, 293–294; Reilly, “Remember History, Not Hatred,” 472–480, 489–490; Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 3–6, 20, 37–53; He, “History, Chinese Nationalism,” 2–3, 9–13, 16–24; Shirk, *Fragile Superpower*, 140–178; Weiss, “Authoritarian Signaling,” 1, 30–32.

<sup>43</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, “China’s Unpeaceful Rise,” *Current History* 105, no. 690 (2006): 162; Robert S. Ross, “Balance of Power Politics and the Rise of China: Accommodation and Balancing in East Asia,” *Security Studies* 15, no. 3, (2006): 387–389, doi:10.1080/09636410601028206; Keith Breene, “Why is Japan’s Economy Shrinking?” *World Economic Forum*, February 16, 2016, [www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/02/why-is-japans-economy-shrinking/](http://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/02/why-is-japans-economy-shrinking/).

<sup>44</sup> Friedberg’s discussion of the “realist pessimist” and the rise of China is reflected in this section. Aaron L. Friedberg, “The Future of U.S.-China Relations: Is Conflict Inevitable?” *International Security* 30, no. 2 (2005): 19–20, [www.jstor.org/stable/4137594](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4137594); Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 10–13, 187.

rising China and a declining Japan could potentially create an East Asia primed for conflict.<sup>45</sup>

Perhaps China is constantly trying to maximize its relative power to ensure the security of its interests; thus, when it feels threatened, China uses the history issue to justify the acquisition of security and military programs, accelerate an aggressive posture in pursuit of national interests, or limit or control Japan's decisions to do the same. In a world of constrained resources, a state's pursuit of security and power usually comes at the expense of others and thus leads to competition and conflict. John J. Mearsheimer has a pessimistic view of China's rise and predicts that China will take actions to maximize relative power with the goal of becoming the regional hegemon to ensure its own security while preventing others within the region from doing the same.<sup>46</sup> The pursuit of power between states in Asia ranges from territorial and political domination to coercion and control over another state's actions. This power can take the form of economic dominance, superior military, cyber and space capabilities, projection of sea power and control of sea lanes, and overall high levels of influence over another state's decision-making ability.<sup>47</sup> Chalmers Johnson and Hidenori Iijri have observed that China continuously capitalizes on Japan's war guilt to both manipulate Japan's actions and contain its pursuit of security and power.<sup>48</sup> Japanese concessions to China's demands over history are seen in its continuous obeisance to China's demands for supplying official development assistance, assenting to change student textbook content, and

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<sup>45</sup> Aaron L. Friedberg discusses many outcomes and theories over the implications of China's rise. For the purpose of this section, he discusses the view of the "realist pessimist" in which China's rise will not be peaceful and will be in conflict with status quo states. Friedberg, "Future of U.S.-China Relations," 16–24; Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, 186–197.

<sup>46</sup> Mearsheimer, "China's Unpeaceful Rise," 160–162.

<sup>47</sup> Wickett, Nilsson-Wright, and Summers all describe different narratives and possible outcomes of China's rise and its possibilities with other states in Asia. Xenia Wickett, John Nilsson-Wright, and Tim Summers, "The Asia-Pacific Power Balance: Beyond the U.S.-China Narrative," Research Paper, Chatham House: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, September 2015, 15–16, 26–30, [www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/field/field\\_document/20150924AsiaPacificWickettNilssonWrightSummersFinal.pdf](http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/field/field_document/20150924AsiaPacificWickettNilssonWrightSummersFinal.pdf).

<sup>48</sup> Chalmers Johnson, "The Patterns of Japanese Relations with China, 1952–1982," *Pacific Affairs* 59, no. 3 (1986): 403–428, doi:10.2307/2758327; Hidenori Ijiri, "Sino-Japanese Controversy since the 1972 Diplomatic Normalization," *China Quarterly*, no. 124 (1990): 639–661, [www.jstor.org/stable/654641](http://www.jstor.org/stable/654641).

agreeing to not visit the Yasukuni Shrine as well as its resolve to solve international conflicts without the use of force.<sup>49</sup>

Thomas Christensen discusses China's heightened distrust of Japan, which stems from Japan's past wartime aggression and Japan's inability to accept China's modern interpretation of its militaristic history.<sup>50</sup> Chinese elites fear that Japan's apparent amnesia in regard to its chosen narrative as a victim of the war has clouded the judgment among the policy makers in Tokyo. Japanese education materials, literature, media, and propaganda portray Japan's war past with emphasis on two interpretations: either the Japanese people were coerced or tricked by a select few Japanese militarists or that Japan was the only country to experience the horrors of two atomic bombs.<sup>51</sup> Neither interpretation gives much regard to Japan's aggression in Asia. This clouded remembrance and downplaying of atrocities in the education of the next generations could eventually lead the public to ignore or forget the wrongdoings of its own history. Moreover, hawkish agendas could easily take root to support stronger nationalism, escalation of military power, and renewed motivations for dominance in Asia.<sup>52</sup>

Furthermore, the Chinese fear of a repeat of the Japanese aggression displayed in the 1930s. Hence, China continually reminds Japan of its wartime aggression in attempts to reeducate and remind the Japanese people of their own history. In addition, China also plays the history card to prevent the seeds of military aggression from growing and to contain any motivations to revise Article 9 of the Japanese peace constitution. Although Japan boasts of a reformed government that has learned never again to fight a war of aggression, China is suspicious of Japan's motivations in maintaining a robust military capability in Asia and having the largest military budget in Asia, second to that of the

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<sup>49</sup> Shirk, *Fragile Superpower*, 145–148, 155–160, 174–180; Akiko Hashimoto, *The Long Defeat*, 126–134; Ijiri, “Sino-Japanese Controversy,” 640–642; He, “Ripe for Cooperation,” 185–190.

<sup>50</sup> Christensen, “Security Dilemma in East Asia,” 49–58.

<sup>51</sup> Hashimoto, *The Long Defeat*, 124.

<sup>52</sup> Christensen, “Security Dilemma in East Asia,” 49–58.



United States.<sup>53</sup> In addition, Japan has a military arsenal of advanced weapons, ballistic missile defense (BMD) platforms, sophisticated military technologies, and significant amounts of nuclear fissile materials, namely enriched uranium and reprocessed plutonium. Although Japan's arsenal is directed at North Korea, China may see this as a potential threat to China's rise or a block to its interests in the ECS and Taiwan. Hence, China may even play the history card to suppress any motivations to use or slow down the expansion of Japan's offensive capability.<sup>54</sup>

#### **D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES**

The scope of the hypotheses will focus on how China views the history issue and how this issue has affected Sino-Japanese relations. From China's point of view, the differences in the remembrance of the history between both countries and the lingering bitterness of Japan's past militaristic aggression has made historical incompatibility an issue. On the other hand, Japan does not believe that the differences in historical remembrance should be an issue between the nations and tries to avoid and downplay China's demands to resolve what it perceives should be a domestic concern. The thesis explores two possible explanations for when, why, and how China has used and currently uses the history issue and how this has resulted in predominately negative Sino-Japanese relations: (1) China's collective experiences and memories of its wars with Japan and (2) China's coercive use of history to contain Japan's power. This thesis does not fully explore the possibility of Chinese elites using the reinterpretation of its history as a basis for regime legitimacy and state-driven nationalism. Nor does this thesis analyze the influence of power transitions and the personalities of Chinese and Japanese leaders and their influence on the upsurge or downplay of historical grievances. Additional research is needed to compare all four hypotheses to better explain how the history issue is exploited by China and how it has affected bilateral relations.

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<sup>53</sup> Christensen discusses the rivalry between China and Japan creates an environment ripe for a possible security dilemma and escalation of tensions in East Asia and can be worsened without substantial U.S. military influence in the area. Christensen, "Security Dilemma in East Asia," 49–58.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

## **1. Hypothesis 1: Collective Remembrance and Public Opinion**

The first hypothesis is that the history issue stems from within the Chinese public psyche, which harbors deep emotional resentment, and is a permanent part of the people's collective memory. This goes beyond the history issue as merely a tool used by the elites. In this case, the history issue permeates Chinese collective remembrance, shapes their own identity and the identity of others, and allows their society to make sense of its place relative to the world it lives in. Genuine anti-Japanese sentiments are fueled by provocative Japanese actions, which sometimes occur in conjunction with periods of remembrance and commemoration of Japan's past wartime aggression. These sentiments can manifest into public uprisings to demand Beijing take action against Japan, even if it is not in the best interest of CCP policies. Chinese citizens independent of the CCP form nongovernmental organizations and small political groups to protest Japanese policies and demand Japanese reparations and apologies for its past wartime conduct. Protestors might try to shape and influence Japan's domestic and international policies as well as Beijing's policies regarding Japan. Depending on the people's sentiments, the history issue could serve as a push for, or hindrance to, Beijing's actions regarding Japan.

## **2. Hypothesis 2: Government Use and Relative Power**

The second hypothesis is that China coercively uses its historical experiences of trauma as a balancing tool to prevent potential threats to China's rise in East Asia: the rise of Japan's nationalist ideology, military expansion, and control in Asia, namely the East China Sea. This hypothesis explores China's use of history to justify China's expansion of military power and influence Japan's external behavior and internal politics. When testing the balance of power theory, we can expect that China will bring to the fore the history issue for realpolitik reasons, such as when it feels that its national security interests are threatened, when its economic situation is vulnerable, or when it feels the need to contain Japan's nationalism and possible military and economic aggression. China will potentially use the history card to help justify the need for increased maritime security measures and associated increased budgetary policies for assertive actions in the

East and South China Seas. Perhaps history may not be the basis for conflict, but it may be used to amplify Sino-Japanese tensions to favor China's interests. The assumption here is that China and Japan are the two great powers in Asia, constantly suspicious of one another's intentions, and that they will each take measures either to maximize relative power or to inhibit the other's power. Thus, they are constantly "searching for opportunities to gain power" over one another for state survival, which results in a competitive relationship.<sup>55</sup> This hypothesis explores elements from the balance of power theory and China's use of history to constrain Japan's power, gain economic benefits, and degrade Japan's reputation in the international arena. Therefore, this theory suggests that China uses the history issue for both internal and external reasons to contain and control Japan's actions, and this results in competitive Sino-Japanese relations and a greater likelihood of both conflict and stalemate.

This paper both explores potential answers to when, why, and how China amplifies the history issue and to how Sino-Japanese relations are negatively affected by it. In some cases, the Chinese government uses the history issue as a tool to contain Japanese power, justify domestic agenda policies, and encourage Chinese nationalism. In other cases, the history issue is not used as a tool to manipulate Japan but is a deeply sensitive subject within the collective memory of the people that drive actions in both China and Japan from the bottom up. By exploring these potential explanations, policy makers will have a better understanding of why China preserves the history issue and how the two competing Asian powers see themselves and each other.

## **E. RESEARCH DESIGN**

This thesis analyzes a 44 year period, beginning with official normalization of bilateral relations from 1972 through 2016. Within this time frame, times of cooperation and discord are broken down into the following periods;

- 1972–1989: Period of cooperation (Normalization, Treaty of Peace and Friendship to the Tiananmen Square Incident)

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<sup>55</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2001), 29, 32; Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1979), 109.

- 1989–1999: Period of discord (Tiananmen Square incident, the end of the Cold War, and the Patriotic Education Campaign to 1998 Jiang Zemin’s visit to Tokyo)
- 1999–2003: Period of cooperation (Friendship policy and “new thinking” on Japan)
- 2003–2006: Period of discord (Yasukuni Shrine visits and rising public opinion)
- 2006–2010: Period of cooperation (Revolving door of Japanese prime ministers and avoidance of the Yasukuni Shrine)
- 2010–2016: Period of discord (A rising China and a falling Japan and increasing conflict in the East China Sea)

Next, the conditions, key factors, and expectations highlighted in each of the two hypotheses are applied to the major events of Sino-Japanese conflict and discord and tested for relevance, validity, and degree of impact. The crux of the thesis determines the causal factors on when, how, and why China reminds Japan about the history issue, resulting in predominately negative bilateral relations. This research also attempts to isolate the origins of when and why China brings up, allows for, suppresses, or ignores the history issue. This determines whether there are any related patterns of when the history issue is used and how it either defends or refutes the two hypotheses proposed in this thesis. Furthermore, the thesis explores the origins of Chinese mythmaking, reasons for diverging historical memories, and explanations for the incompatible coexistence of nationalism.

The research design depends heavily on sources by historians, sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, and political scientists. This thesis examines research completed by government politics professors specializing in Sino-Japanese relations, collective memory, and identity concerns. Empirical information is derived from polling data from both Japanese and Chinese popular surveys, newspaper articles, academic journals, books, and media studies. In addition, popular narratives, translated newspaper editorials, documentaries, speeches, blogs, social media, and Internet sites that can be

found in America or translated into English also provide appropriate mediums for research analysis.

## **F. THESIS OVERVIEW AND CHAPTER OUTLINE**

The thesis is designed to answer the origins of the history issue and how it has affected Sino-Japanese security and political, domestic, and foreign relations from the beginning of official diplomatic ties in 1972 to 2016. It attempts to explain why China preserves and renews the history issue and highlights the likely causal factors resulting in China's playing of the history card and why the history issue remains unresolved today. In addition, it explores Chinese nationalism and its reinterpretation of history and analyzes periods of when China brings attention to the history issue to the detriment of Sino-Japanese relations. Furthermore, this thesis also shows how historical differences and distrust of each other's nationalist intentions are generally the root of all conflict and tension between the two nations.

The first chapter introduced the thesis question, main findings, the significance of the topic, and its implications for U.S. policy in Asia. The thesis reviews the two main hypotheses to explain the periods of conflict brought on by the history issue in Sino-Japanese relations: (1) deep feelings of anti-Japanese resentment inherited through a society's collective memory that drive decision making and (2) China's desire to maintain or gain an advantage in the relative balance of power in East Asia.

Chapter II breaks down Sino-Japanese relations into periods of when relations were cooperative and when they were conflictual—a total of six periods. The period from 1972, which marked the beginning of official Sino-Japanese diplomatic normalization, to 1989 with the Tiananmen Square incident and the end of the Cold War is considered to be a period of cooperation. The fall of communism in Europe and the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square incident in 1989 until 1999 was a period of conflict when China became increasingly suspicious of rising Japanese nationalism. From 1999 to 2003, relations were relatively positive as both nations sought to ease tensions and adopt a more amiable foreign policy for economic benefits. From 2003 to 2006, bilateral relations reached one of the lowest periods of discord as Chinese public opinion reached a

heightened status of influence. The next time frame starts with China's desire to amend Sino-Japanese relations in 2006, when anti-Japanese sentiments were suppressed by Beijing to quell popular nationalist riots and domestic disturbances, and end with the 2010 territorial disputes in the East China Sea. The last time frame begins in 2010 and goes through to 2016; this has been predominately a period of near-conflict and near-military engagement between both nations.

Chapters III and IV are dedicated to each hypothesis and analyze the three periods of Sino-Japanese discord for validity. Chapter III is dedicated to the rise of public opinion and the politicization of collective memory from the bottom up. Chapter IV explores history's role in the balance of power between China and Japan. Both chapters look at key events and trends over the periods of discord to determine how China's historical trauma has shaped its Japan policy and influenced its own internal security strategy and Japan's domestic and international policies.

The last chapter offers an assessment of each hypothesis, discusses trends, and concludes with implications for future Sino-Japanese relations. It also attempts to explain the causes for bilateral discord during the three periods of conflict. Lastly, the conclusion offers possible solutions to mitigate the history issue and highlight policy implications for U.S. planners and Japanese planners.

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## II. HISTORY

This chapter reviews changes and developments in the Sino-Japanese political narrative in six periods: 1972–1989, 1989–1999, 1999–2003, 2003–2006, 2006–2010, 2010–2016. Three of the periods were mainly cooperative (1972–1989, 1999–2003, 2006–2010), regarding the history issue, during which China suppressed historical grievances to ease bilateral frictions and Japan avoided or mitigated controversial actions. In the remaining three periods (1989–1999, 2003–2006, 2010–2016), controversial Japanese actions provoked China to stress historical grievances, contributing to a rise in Sino-Japanese tensions. Assessing major history-related events between China and Japan from 1972 to 2016 led to these six time periods. Each of the events had a weak, moderate, or strong impact on positive or negative Sino-Japanese relations as well as significant friction or turning points within the relationship. Table 1 provides the periods of cooperation and discord in Sino-Japanese relations regarding the history issue from 1972 to 2016.

Table 1. Periodization and Characterization of Sino-Japanese Relations regarding the History Issue

<b>Time Period</b>	<b>Characterization of Sino-Japanese Relations from 1972 to 2016</b>
1972–1989	Cooperation
1989–1999	Discord
1999–2003	Cooperation
2003–2006	Discord
2006–2010	Cooperation
2010–2016	Discord

This table breaks down Sino-Japanese relations regarding the history issue from 1972 to 2016 into six time periods (three cooperative and three discordant).

Over the past 44 years, relations that have fluctuated between cooperation and harmony and chronic irritants—especially unresolved disputes over history and sovereignty—have promoted mutual mistrust and concern over security and policy issues. However, to explain the periods of cooperation and discord, this chapter provides



an overview of the events in each time period to better establish when and how the history issue arises or is downplayed, and its impact on Sino-Japanese relations.

#### **A. CHINA'S CENTURY OF HUMILIATION: 1839–1949**

The national trauma China experienced during the century of humiliation is far from forgotten and plays a significant role in establishing a current national narrative that shapes China's domestic and international policies. Mao Zedong once claimed to “use the past to serve the present, make the foreign serve China.”<sup>56</sup> Mao's aphorism should be applied to China's remembrance of its past trauma. China's resolve to “never forget national humiliation” reopened the scars of the past to keep the people and the government ready to prevent outside intrusion.<sup>57</sup> Hence, for China, the past plays a significant role in shaping the future.

For China, Japan's wartime aggression in Asia remains an active wound. China harbors a bitter resentment against past intrusion that reemerges in subsequent generations and makes cooperation with Japan difficult. Unfortunately, Sino-Japanese relations continue to suffer from an underlying animosity experienced from the wartime conflicts in the early 19th and 20th centuries. China's prickly historical relationship with Japan shapes current bilateral relations. Hence bring an understanding of the root of historical disputes between China and Japan, the subsequent section briefly gives an overview of the key events that took place during China's century of humiliation.

China's century of humiliation began with the 1839 Opium Wars with Great Britain and ended with the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) under the leadership of the CCP in 1949. The Opium Wars ended in unequal treaties that shocked the Chinese system. Britain forcibly opened ports, appropriated territory to open trade sectors, demanded most-favored-nation status, and imposed trade tariffs that limited Chinese revenue. British military occupation divided China into spheres of influence,

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<sup>56</sup> Anne-Marie Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China: Managing Foreigners in the People's Republic*, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 253.

<sup>57</sup> Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 95–141.

with unequal treaty systems, and enforced drastic indemnities. It was during this time that China lost its autonomy and sovereignty and became a weaker nation subject to foreign intrusion and economic exploitation.<sup>58</sup>

But the greatest humiliations of this century center on Japan, beginning with Japan's defeat of China in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), and its ascendancy as the dominant power in East Asia.<sup>59</sup> In response to the Tonghak Rebellion (1894), a Korean uprising against Japan's enforcement of trade through a series of unequal treaties, Japan deployed its army into Korea, while China mobilized troops to prevent this interference with a neighboring state. The rebellion began the First Sino-Japanese War, in which a better trained and better equipped Japan quickly defeated Chinese and Korean opposition. The subsequent Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895 recognized Korea as an independent state<sup>60</sup> and forced China to relinquish Taiwan and the surrounding Pescadores Islands to Japan. China's modern fleet was destroyed and its people subjected to Japanese influence. Because China traditionally viewed Japan as an inferior tributary state, a weakened China felt its defeat with great shame. Power and dominance now belonged to Japan—the new center of the Asian world.<sup>61</sup>

In the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945), Japan exploited China's instability, lack of cohesive leadership, and less capable military to pursue economic colonization in a “reign of terror” that still burns in the memories of the colonized

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<sup>58</sup> Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 49–69; Conrad Schirokauer and Donald N. Clark, *Modern East Asia: A Brief History*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008), 128–129.

<sup>59</sup> The Sino-Japanese War from 1894 to 1895 was also known as the First Sino-Japanese War. It resulted with the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895. Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 54.

<sup>60</sup> “Independent state” meaning that Korea no longer enjoyed the traditional tributary-like relationship with China. However, Japan continued to brutally occupy Korea until the end of World War II.

<sup>61</sup> Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 54–55.

peoples of China.<sup>62</sup> Japan enacted harsh rule after annexing most of northeast China and Manchuria in 1931, yet the true horror began in 1937 after Japan seized key seaports in central China and, eventually, large regions of Southeast Asia. It is estimated that by 1945, Japan's Imperial Army controlled over 900 Chinese cities.<sup>63</sup> The Rape of Nanjing in 1937<sup>64</sup> and the brutality of the Japanese occupation in WWII united opposing parties in the Chinese government in fighting Japanese imperialism.<sup>65</sup> The cruelty, violence, and oppression of the Imperial Army ceased only in 1945 with the devastation of the Japanese homeland, economy, and prospects; the debasement of the emperor's divine status; and the disbandment and forced unconditional surrender of the military.<sup>66</sup> The century of humiliation ended in 1949 when the Communists won the civil war and established the

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<sup>62</sup> It is important to mention the Mukden Incident which took place on September 18, 1931. In this incident, a railroad station was attacked by Chinese rebels in the loosely Japanese-occupied Manchuria. This attack gave Japan justification for the mobilization of Japanese Imperial troops to fully invade China to completely take over Manchuria to establish a puppet government. For more details on the Mukden Incident, see June Teufel Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom and Empire of the Rising Sun: Sino-Japanese Relations, Past and Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 68–70. However, the Second Sino-Japanese War begins with the Marco Polo Bridge Incident on July 7, 1937, in which Chiang Kai Shek, commander of China's military, was defeated by the Japanese Imperial Army when fighting broke out between China and Japan at the bridge. From this time until Japan's defeat at the end of the WWII, Japan had occupied the majority of the port cities as well as the capital of China, Nanjing. While fighting against the Japanese, China was undergoing a civil war between the KMT and the CCP for control over China. During this time, the KMT and CCP united on certain fronts to fight the Japanese. The civil war resumed from 1945 to 1949 once the CCP defeated the KMT. The Second Sino-Japanese War is also known in Chinese records as the Anti-Japanese War or the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 56–60, 78–84; Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 72–75, 77–80.

<sup>63</sup> Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 204.

<sup>64</sup> The Chinese people have documented that over 300,000 Chinese civilians were killed during the Nanjing Massacre. Japan debates this number, and on occasion, right-wing Japanese officials have claimed that the Nanjing Massacre numbers are fabricated by the Chinese. Japan and China continue to have debates on the incidents that occurred and the number of casualties. Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 57–60.

<sup>65</sup> The Chinese Nationalists and the Communists were fighting a civil war while fighting the Japanese. Thus, these two opposing parties collaborated (on occasion) to fight the Japanese. After 1945, they resumed the fight against each other until 1949, when the Communist Party, under Mao Zedong was the victor, forcing the nationalists under Chiang Kai-Shek to exile on the island of Taiwan. The brutalities of Japanese occupation included but were not limited to the Nanjing Massacre, the human biological and chemical experiments at Harbin, forced labor, the use of chemical and biological warfare weapons, and the use of Chinese women as sex slaves, euphemistically known as "comfort women." Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 57–60, 78–84; Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 72–75, 77–80.

<sup>66</sup> John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. North & Company, 1999), 33–64.

PRC.<sup>67</sup> Although the century of humiliation began with violations from the West, the Japanese occupation was the most searing offense.

After WWII, China suffered isolation, famine, domestic strife, poverty, and geopolitical threats as it struggled to move forward under Communist rule. China's anger over Japanese atrocities and its focus on recovery distanced the countries from each other, as did the CCP's pursuit of economic policies to catch China up with the industrialized world. Historical disputes did not resurface until the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1972.<sup>68</sup> The smoldering outrage of the Chinese people, which was stoked in the early 1990s through the CCP's patriotic education campaign, ensured that historical injuries and resentments remained prominent in Chinese foreign policy and diplomatic relations into the 21st century.<sup>69</sup>

## **B. OVERVIEW OF THE PERIODS OF COOPERATION AND DISCORD**

The following section provides a brief overview and characterization of each of the six periods of cooperation and discord.

### **1. Period of Cooperation (1972–1989): From Joint Communiqué and Forgiveness to Tiananmen Square**

Sino-Japanese relations began positively in 1972 with the dawn of what June Dreyer calls the “golden age of Sino-Japanese relations.”<sup>70</sup> As depicted in Figure 1, the years 1972–1989 were a predominately cooperative time as both countries set aside historical animosities to focus on economic ties in support of Chinese industrialization and new markets for Japan, and to establish diplomatic ties to ally against the Soviet threat.<sup>71</sup>

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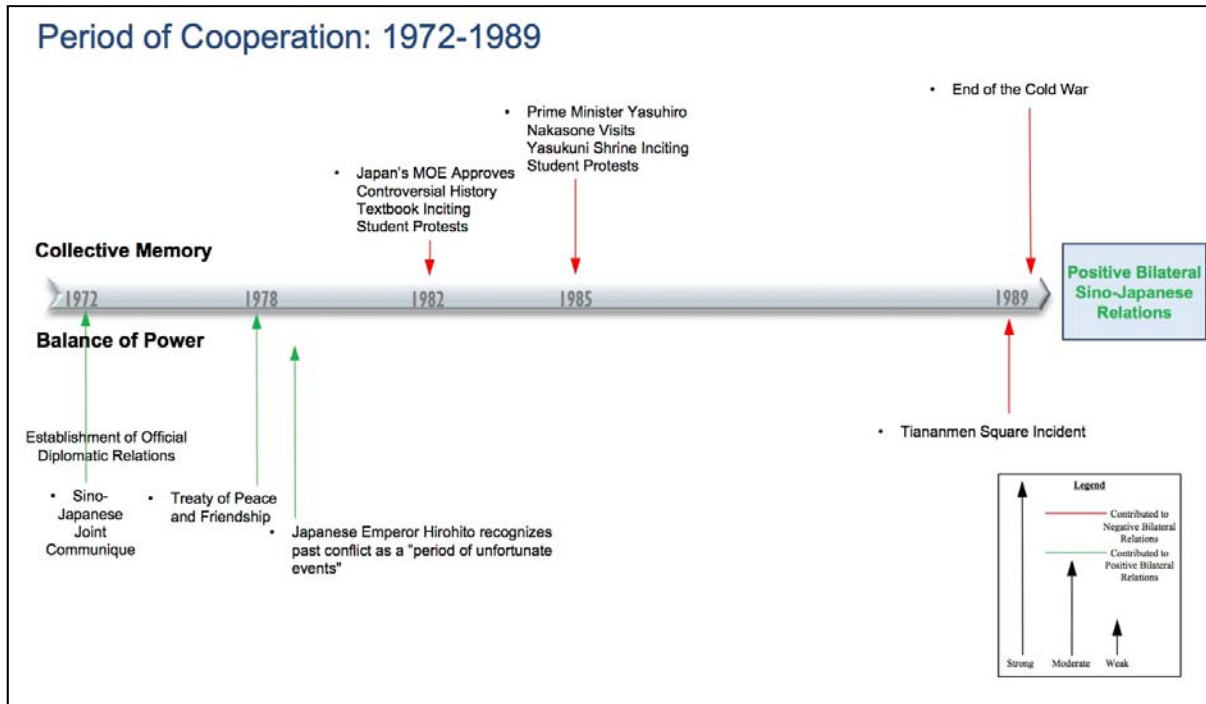
<sup>67</sup> Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 54, 95–117, 163–165.

<sup>68</sup> Kenneth Liberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution through Reform*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004), 86–119.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 8–9.

<sup>70</sup> Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 156.

<sup>71</sup> Johnson, “Patterns of Japanese Relations with China,” 410–419; Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 156–187.



China and Japan mostly cooperated during this period as historical grievances played a small to moderate role in affecting bilateral relations. Diplomatic and economic cooperation played a more dominant role in the relationship to allow for positive bilateral cooperation. History-related events are depicted as weak, moderate or strong contributions (arrow sizes) to either positive (green) or negative (red) Sino-Japanese relations. The upper half of the figure depicts events most affected by collective memory (Hypothesis 1). The lower half of the figure depicts events most affected by the balance of power (Hypothesis 2). For this thesis, arrow placement (above or below) was determined by which hypothesis better represented the event.

Figure 1. 1972–1989: Period of Cooperation

President Richard Nixon’s 1972 visit to China changed U.S. policy from isolation to cooperation against the Soviet threat, easing relations worldwide and inviting new alliances between former enemies. Japan took the opportunity to normalize relations with China and support America’s strategy of exacerbating a growing Sino-Soviet split. Japan’s objectives comported well with China’s anti-Moscow sentiments and desire for prosperity. Beijing “pursued a China policy that separated economics from politics,”<sup>72</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Kenneth Pyle, *Japan Rising* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007), 315.

allowing prosperity to take precedence over recriminations and cultivating the benefits of cooperation. Thus, began two decades of a somewhat amicable relationship, in which Japan acquiesced to Chinese demands and China declined to mention Japan's imperial rule. This arrangement allowed China and Japan to act as powerful economic and security allies while "strengthen[ing] China's strategic position in the international system."<sup>73</sup>

Relations between China and Japan were officially normalized in a joint communiqué in 1972. Four economic trade agreements in the areas of trade, shipping, aviation, and fisheries were negotiated, and China "renounce[ed] the demand for war reparation[s] from Japan," paving the way for the Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1978.<sup>74</sup> Chairman Mao Zedong and Premier Zhou Enlai were satisfied with a joint statement of Japanese remorse in the communiqué and did not require that Japan's current generation pay for the wrongdoings of their forefathers.<sup>75</sup> In part, as a form of unofficial reparation, Japan greatly subsidized China's economic revival through low-cost loans and foreign direct investment (FDI). In turn, China suppressed demonstrations of popular animosity and historical grievances toward Japan and worked through disagreements. Each government praised the other and minimized conflicts in the 19th and 20th centuries as relatively small, regrettable episodes in an otherwise fruitful shared history.<sup>76</sup> On August 12, 1978, China and Japan signed the Treaty of Peace and Friendship, in which China opened its economic and modernization efforts to cooperate with Japan and gained a powerful regional ally against the Soviet military threat.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> M. Wan, *Sino-Japanese Relations*, 84–108; quote is from p. 86.

<sup>74</sup> "Joint Communiqué of the Government of Japan and the Government of the People's Republic of China," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, September 29, 1972, [www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/china/joint72.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/china/joint72.html); M. Wan, *Sino-Japanese Relations*, 86–87.

<sup>75</sup> Shirk, *Fragile Superpower*, 158–159.

<sup>76</sup> Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 157.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

Chinese Premier Hu Yaobang supported the expansion of Japan's military capabilities and pressed Japan's prime minister to take a firm anti-Soviet position.<sup>78</sup> The reconciliation of Beijing and Tokyo was further enhanced in December 1978 when Japan's emperor expressed remorse over the occupation. Ming Wan noted that Deng Xiaoping "replied that the two nations should let bygones be bygones and adopt forward-looking attitudes."<sup>79</sup> A peaceful and cooperative tone predominated after 1978, with China's grievances taking a backseat to economic goals.<sup>80</sup>

Despite Beijing's efforts to shore up Sino-Japanese relations, by 1986, Chinese elites and political analysts began to express concerns over Japan's increasing defense expenditures and hosting of U.S. nuclear ships. Despite the benefits of partnership with Japan, political commentators expressed suspicion of Japan's expanding military capability and desire for international influence. Japan's inability, for diplomatic reasons, to share its military technology with nations other than the United States excited further mistrust of Japanese goals and intentions. Some Chinese analysts interpreted these developments as a sign of ascendant Japanese militarism and aggression.<sup>81</sup>

The history issue reemerged in 1982 when Japan's minister of education authorized a "softening" of the descriptions of Japanese aggression, occupation, and atrocity in the nation's textbooks—for example, downplaying the invasion and occupation of Asia from 1895 to 1945. Influential Chinese papers as the *Zhongguo Qingnian Bao* railed against this revisionism in published articles, fueling resentment nationwide.<sup>82</sup> By 1985, protests by Chinese students, scholars, and news media threatened to damage Sino-Japanese relations. In 1985, at a commemoration of the end of

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 169–170, 173.

<sup>79</sup> M. Wan, *Sino-Japanese Relations*, 89.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 84–108; Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 156–187.

<sup>81</sup> Allen S. Whiting, *China Eyes Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 134–140, 147.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 46–47, 51.

WWII, Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone made an inflammatory official visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, where several class A war criminals, including leaders in the occupation of China, were buried. The same year, hundreds of students demonstrated in Tiananmen Square against Japanese revisionism, demanding accuracy in textbooks, characterizing Japanese imports and economic dominance as a “second occupation,” and calling for the boycott of Japanese goods.<sup>83</sup>

To maintain peaceful relations and influence public reaction, the CCP defended China’s economic and political ties with Japan, arguing that most of the people, government, and businesses of Japan were not guilty of wartime atrocities, but only a small, select group of militarists. At the same time, Japan’s minister of education agreed to revise the textbooks and the prime minister forswore visits to the Yasukuni Shrine. Both Beijing and Tokyo promoted cooperative domestic policies to preserve good Sino-Japanese relations and supported the other’s economic priorities, with the Chinese government employing authoritarian suppression of dissent toward this end.<sup>84</sup>

The televising of CCP brutalities regarding the student-led protests for better living conditions and more democratic government reform and the violent suppression of Chinese public protests during the Tiananmen Square incident of 1989 did not initially harm Sino-Japanese relations.<sup>85</sup> Sosuke Uno, Japan’s new prime minister, refused to

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 67–76; Shirk, *Fragile Superpower*, 160–161.

<sup>84</sup> Shirk, *Fragile Superpower*, 160–164.

<sup>85</sup> The Tiananmen Square Incident was not directly aimed at protests against the Japanese. It began with students demonstrating for better living conditions and more democratic reforms. China’s opening to the West with its modernization programs also allowed for the influx of more Western ideological ideals to permeate the Chinese public’s thought. As students demonstrated to increasingly criticize the Central Authority’s Rule in China and threatened CCP legitimacy, the government declared martial law and instituted a violent repression of protestors and a shutdown of media sources authorized to cover the event. Exact number of victims from the police and law enforcement brutalities were never made public, but estimates range from the hundreds to the thousands. As a result of the limited televised brutalities and personal accounts of the incident, the international community condemned the CCP’s handling of the event as a violation of human rights and liberties. “Tiananmen Square Fast Facts,” CCN Library, June 3, 2016, [www.cnn.com/2013/09/15/world/asia/tiananmen-square-fast-facts/](http://www.cnn.com/2013/09/15/world/asia/tiananmen-square-fast-facts/); Ma Jian, “Tiananmen Square 25 Years On: ‘Every Person in the Crowd was a Victim of the Massacre,’” *Guardian*, June 1, 2014, [www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/01/tiananmen-square-25-years-every-person-victim-massacre](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/01/tiananmen-square-25-years-every-person-victim-massacre); Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 182–187.



condemn Beijing's actions and violations of human rights, cautious of interfering in a sovereign nation's internal affairs—moreover, Japan's own recent history contained worse brutalities against Chinese civilians. After a quick interruption to allow the Chinese government to recover from the Tiananmen Square incident, Japanese officials and businessmen resumed operations in China, and bilateral diplomacy continued. China thanked Japan for not joining the international condemnation. Nevertheless, persistent condemnation from the West, criticism from global media sources, and the disapproval of human rights organizations persuaded Japan to abandon its neutrality. Uno reluctantly agreed to international sanctions against China and suspended a five-year, \$5.8 billion loan.<sup>86</sup> Although Japan was the first G-7 power to reestablish official developmental assistance (ODA) to China after the Tiananmen Square incident, the incident did not initially prevent a downturn in bilateral relations.<sup>87</sup>

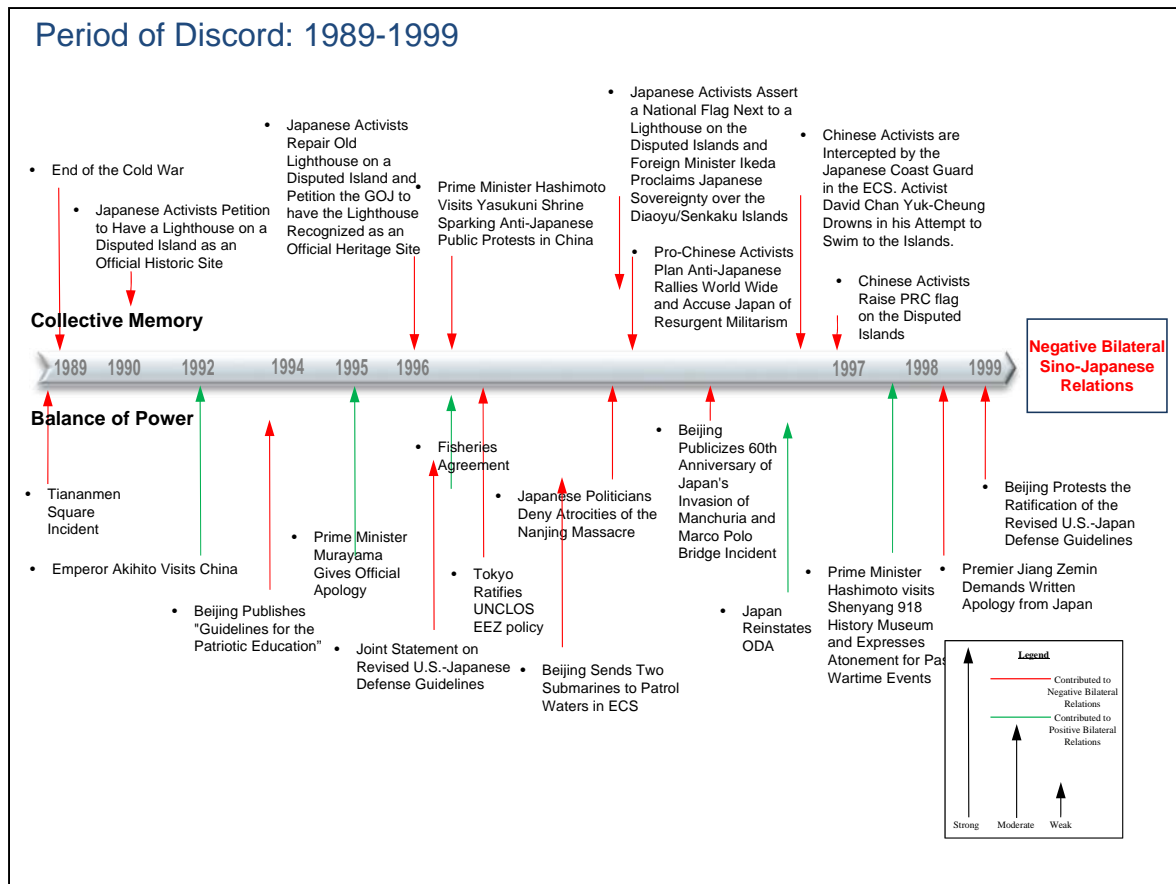
## **2. Period of Discord (1989–1999): From the End of the Cold War to East China Sea Disputes**

The period from 1989 to 1998 was a period of discord because historical grievances heavily affected bilateral relations. Figure 2 depicts the main history-related issues that positively and negatively impacted relations.

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<sup>86</sup> Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 183–185.

<sup>87</sup> The G-7 powers include Japan, United States, Great Britain, Germany, France, Canada, and Italy. The G-7 economic international organization established in 1985 whose membership is made of democratic governments. Zachary Laub and James McBride, “The Group of Seven (G7),” Council on Foreign Relations, last modified June 2, 2015, [www.cfr.org/international-organizations-and-alliances/group-seven-g7/p32957](http://www.cfr.org/international-organizations-and-alliances/group-seven-g7/p32957); Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 182–189.



Collective memory and balance of power played a nearly equal role in explaining the downturn of bilateral relations during this period. History-related events are depicted as weak, moderate or strong contributions (arrow sizes) to either positive (green) or negative (red) Sino-Japanese relations. The upper half of the figure depicts events most affected by collective memory (Hypothesis 1). The lower half of the figure depicts events most affected by the balance of power (Hypothesis 2). For this thesis, arrow placement (above or below) was determined by which hypothesis better represented the event.

Figure 2. 1989–1999: Period of Discord

This section touches on key events that shaped the Sino-Japanese relationship from 1989 to 1998, a period covered in detail in Chapters III and IV. Internally, China was recovering from the Tiananmen Square incident by preparing a “patriotic-education campaign” to reaffirm CCP legitimacy. Externally, the end of the Cold War and the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe shook the international playing field and made rivals of former allies.

Sino-Japanese relations took a downturn after 1989. After the globally televised Tiananmen crackdown, Beijing looked for ways to rescue its legitimacy, unity, and prestige, and valorize the CCP as Western liberal ideas infiltrated private thoughts and public discourse. The end of the Cold War also recast Sino-Japanese relations. With the demise of the Soviet Union, China no longer faced an adversary on its northern border or required an alliance with Japan to strengthen defenses. Thus, the end of the Cold War relieved China of the strategic necessity of graciousness, and the Tiananmen Square incident propelled Beijing to relegitimize CCP rule under nationalism and patriotism.<sup>88</sup> Both events, however contributed to a downturn in bilateral relations and history became a volatile issue as China and Japan changed from partners to competitors.<sup>89</sup>

The CCP revitalized the narrative of Chinese victimization by foreign powers through a massive educational campaign to “never forget national humiliation.”<sup>90</sup> Zheng Wang observes, “the current CCP leaders utilize[d] China’s past history of humiliation to awaken people’s historical consciousness and build cohesion” among the people, uniting them under the banner of CCP legitimacy and authority.<sup>91</sup> This propaganda promoted two main themes: China as the victim of Western and Japanese imperial oppression, and the CCP as responsible for defeating Japan, ending the century of humiliation, and restoring Chinese sovereignty.<sup>92</sup> This dual identity of victim and victor enabled China to both exploit Japan’s evils against a vulnerable China while also demonstrating the strength and superiority of the authoritarian party. Kindergarteners through university students learned of “China’s humiliating modern history and how much the country has been changed by the Communist revolution.”<sup>93</sup> Beijing presented the 19th and 20th centuries as full of

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<sup>88</sup> Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 119–121.

<sup>89</sup> M. Wan, *Sino-Japanese Relations*, 122–125; He, “Forty Years in Paradox,” 4–10;

<sup>90</sup> CCP leader Jiang Zemin launched a massive patriotic education campaign to “relegitimize the Communist government” (page 100). Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 95–141.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 96–104, 119–129.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

suffering under the targeting of China by outsiders.<sup>94</sup> Beijing erected hundreds of memorials and statues depicting scenes from the century of humiliation and rallied national bitterness over Western incursions while extolling the CCP for ousting foreign powers. Revised Chinese textbooks glorified the CCP's ending of the century of humiliation with a successful revolution, the defeat of Western imperialism, and the return of sovereignty, independence, and standing among the nations. Chinese media in all forms, from theater to newspapers, demonized rival nations for their roles in victimizing China. The result of the patriotic education campaign was a retraumatized society subscribing to a grand narrative that glorified the party at the expense of Japan and the West. Thus, the history campaign fed already existing contempt for Japan and hindered reconciliation, creating a nadir in relations after the joint communiqué of 1972.<sup>95</sup>

Meanwhile, a rise in nationalism in both countries made them increasingly incompatible as allies. China was a centralized, authoritarian government focused on preserving CCP legitimacy. Its propaganda drive stoked loyalty to the CCP but also threw gasoline on anti-Japanese fears. Demands by protestors that historical disputes be a present factor in diplomatic negotiations were occasionally successful, a positive outcome from China's perspective. Japan, however, was eager to put its past behind and regain its standing in the world. Right-wing Japanese officials observing China's renewed hostility began voicing a need for increased security and military measures. Japan desired a relationship between equals, in which placation was not a part. The return of the history issue reignited contention between Japan and China and degraded Sino-Japanese relations. China used history to justify its mistrust of Japanese goals and intentions, while Japan lost patience with the blame game.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 96–117.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 95–141.

<sup>96</sup> M. Wan, *Sino-Japanese Relations*, 109–141.

In the early and mid-1990s, anti-Japanese demonstrations peppered China despite Beijing's attempts to preserve positive economic and diplomatic relations. Cultural and political activists increasingly called for apologies and financial compensation from Japan as well as for more official commemorations of wartime atrocities, a harder line on East China Sea (ECS) sovereignty, and tougher CCP stances in general. Despite a visit from and apologetic remarks by Emperor Akihito in 1992 and a prime-ministerial apology in 1995, the Chinese people continued to scorn Japan's insincere contrition. In this context, Japanese Prime Minister Hashimoto's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine in July 1996 was a resounding slap to China and instigated fervid protest. The 1990s were a time of major civil compensations through a highly publicized redress movement for Chinese victims of wartime atrocities.<sup>97</sup> Lawsuits brought by Chinese nongovernmental agencies and Japanese civil groups against the Japanese government and major corporations forced Chinese and Japanese entities to cooperate in the legal arena.<sup>98</sup> The accompanying exposure of Japanese war crimes, however, gripped Chinese society, generating demands for reparations and schoolbook revisions.<sup>99</sup> In mid-1997, a series of revised history books was published in Japan and a new wing to the Museum of the War of Chinese People's Resistance against Japanese Aggression was opened to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Marco Polo Bridge incident.<sup>100</sup>

In this period, Sino-Japanese relations also suffered under sovereignty disputes in the ECS, the testing of nuclear weapons, the renewal of U.S.-Japanese security guidelines, and China's ceaseless demands for apology. China's increasing boldness in the ECS and around Taiwan triggered the deployment of U.S. aircraft carriers to the region and a third Taiwan Strait crisis.<sup>101</sup> Critical of China's growing military budget and

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<sup>97</sup> Caroline Rose, *Sino-Japanese Relations: Facing the Past, Looking to the Future?* (London: Routledge, 2009): 69–98.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 188–199.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 297–300, 341–342.

nuclear testing, Japan suspended grant aid payments.<sup>102</sup> Japan's adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) policy, with its recognition of 200nm exclusive economic zones (EEZs), and Tokyo's approval of a Japanese nationalist group that claimed the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands enraged the Chinese public.<sup>103</sup> Meanwhile, Tokyo sought closer security ties with the United States in the revised U.S.-Japanese defense guidelines.<sup>104</sup> Interpreting the revision as an attempt to contain China's rise, Beijing defiantly increased its activity in the ECS and moved closer to Russia through the Shanghai Cooperative Organization.<sup>105</sup> By the end of the decade, however, President Jiang Zemin's outspoken demands for a written apology backfired on China, and Beijing swung to a policy of reestablishing cooperative ties and shelving historical disputes to promote Chinese interests.<sup>106</sup> However, historical disputes raised bilateral tensions and contributed to a period of discordant Sino-Japanese relations.

### **3. Period of Cooperation (1999–2003): “Smile Diplomacy” and “New Thinking” on Sino-Japanese Relations**

Although grievances over history and nationalism remained, Sino-Japanese cooperation from 1999 to 2003 showed a glimmer of hope. As Tokyo and Beijing sought avenues to mutual tolerance, differences became downplayed. Figure 3 highlights the

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<sup>102</sup> This number was an estimate based on FY 1994 grant aid given to China the year prior. In FY 1994, Japan provided \$91.8 million to support grants for China's education and health care, \$94 million in grants in technical assistance, and \$1.6 billion in other loans. Japan suspended the grant aid to protest Chinese nuclear testing as the Non-Proliferation treaty (NPT) was extended to ensure no new nuclear testing by the P5 powers and to allow the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) to take over. China was trying to get its nuclear testing done before the CTBT was approved, which would have limited its ability to test its weapons. William Long, “Nonproliferation as a Goal of Japanese Foreign Assistance,” *Asian Survey* 39, no. 2 (Mar–Apr 1999): 333–336, doi:10.2307/2645458; Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 84–85.

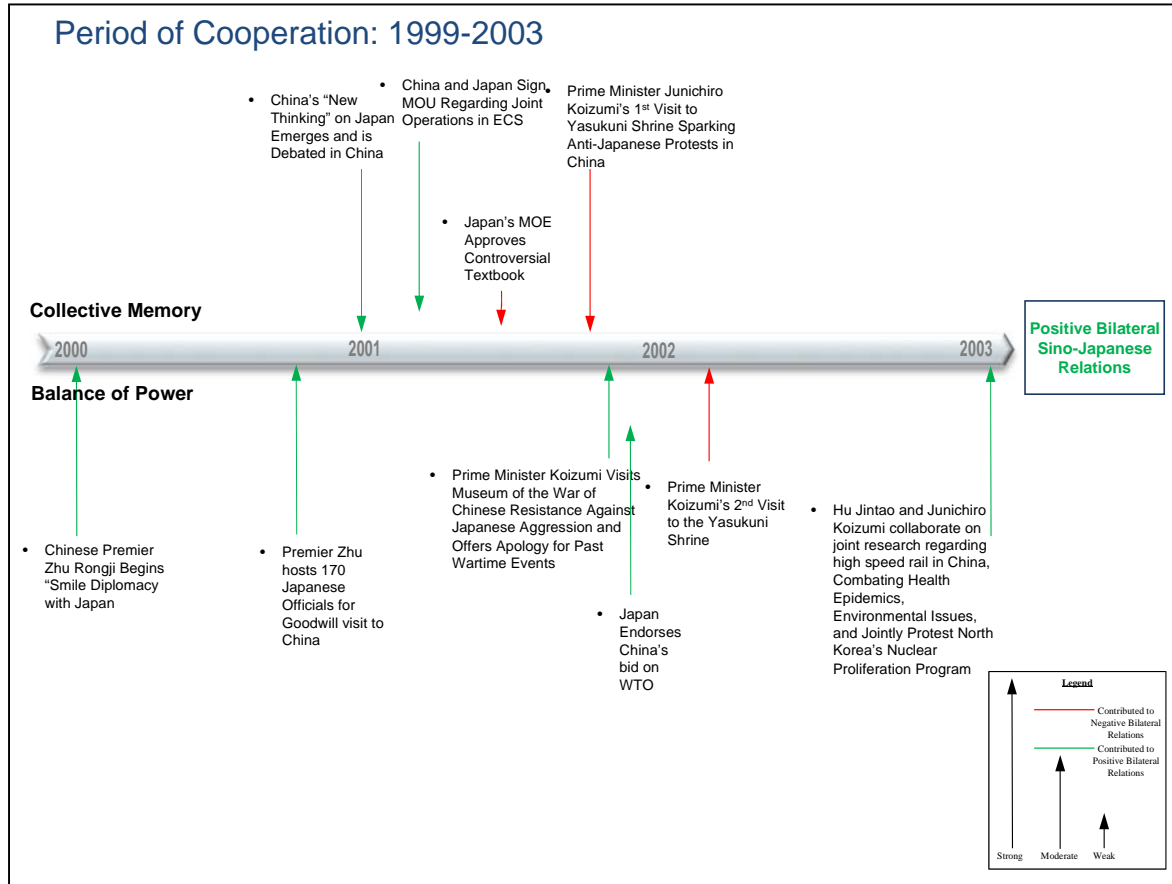
<sup>103</sup> Krista E. Wiegand, “China's Strategy in the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands Dispute: Issue Linkage and Coercive Diplomacy,” *Asian Security* 5, no. 2 (29 May 2009), 182–185, doi: 10.1080/14799850902886617.

<sup>104</sup> Chris Ajemian, “The 1997 U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines Under the Japanese Constitution and their Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy,” *Pacific Rim Law & Policy Journal* 7, no. 2 (March 1998): 323–325, <https://digital.law.washington.edu/dspace-law/bitstream/handle/1773.1/858/7PacRimLPolyJ323.pdf?sequence=1> <https://digital.law.washington.edu/dspace-law/bitstream/handle/1773.1/858/7PacRimLPolyJ323.pdf?sequence=1>; “Japan-U.S. Joint Declaration on Security—Alliance for the 21st Century,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, April 17, 1996, [www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/security.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/security.html).

<sup>105</sup> Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 193.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 196–200.

major cooperative actions that overshadowed any historical grievances that took place during this time.



Sino-Japanese relations improved during this period as Chinese leaders worked to promote positive relations. History-related events are depicted as weak, moderate or strong contributions (arrow sizes) to either positive (green) or negative (red) Sino-Japanese relations. The upper half of the figure depicts events most affected by collective memory (Hypothesis 1). The lower half of the figure depicts events most affected by the balance of power (Hypothesis 2). For this thesis, arrow placement (above or below) was determined by which hypothesis better represented the event.

Figure 3. 1999–2003: Period of Cooperation

The period began with Premier Zhu Rongji's "smile diplomacy" to mend ties and focus on positive bilateral action.<sup>107</sup> During a visit to Japan in 2000, Zhu sympathized with the Japanese as fellow victims of the war and promised greater appreciation for

<sup>107</sup> Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 81–82; Shirk, *Fragile Superpower*, 167–168.

Japanese ODA. President Jiang Zemin praised the relationship with Japan, observing that China had enjoyed over “2,000 years of friendship.”<sup>108</sup> An invitation from Premier Zhu to host 170 Japanese senior officials on a goodwill visit further brightened relations. In early 2000, Japan announced its plan to endorse China’s membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO) and signed a joint statement agreeing to mutual notification before conducting operations in the ECS. Territorial disputes were downplayed and efforts were made to prevent escalation such as talks on joint research, exploration, and ECS operations. To an acclamation by Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori of the emperor’s divinity and a statement glorifying Japanese history, China reacted mildly, with only a routine statement of disapproval from the foreign ministry.<sup>109</sup> Although in 2001 Koizumi visited the Yasukuni Shrine as prime minister, Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi noted that he had visited on a less-symbolic date.<sup>110</sup> Shortly after, Beijing welcomed a visit by Koizumi to the Marco Polo Bridge memorial, where the prime minister offered an oral apology for Japan’s past wartime aggression.<sup>111</sup>

Beijing also reacted moderately to inadequacies in Japan’s textbook revisions by providing a list of requested corrections. An article in the *People’s Daily* advised the Chinese public not to be over alarmed, stating, “A majority of Japanese had a good understanding of history and that those trying to distort history and cause confusion were a minority.”<sup>112</sup> Although the advent of the Internet allowed greater dissemination of historical accounts and anti-Japanese views, riots and demonstrations were rarely an issue.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 81.

<sup>109</sup> Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 81; Conor O’Clery, “‘Divine Japan’ Remark Angers China,” *Irish Times*, May 17, 2000, [www.irishtimes.com/news/divine-japan-remark-angers-china-1.271907](http://www.irishtimes.com/news/divine-japan-remark-angers-china-1.271907).

<sup>110</sup> Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 84; M. Wan, *Sino-Japanese Relations*, 240–243.

<sup>111</sup> Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 202; M. Wan, *Sino-Japanese Relations*, 244–245.

<sup>112</sup> Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 82.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 81–84; Shirk, *Fragile Superpower*, 167–169; Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 200, 202; M. Wan, *Sino-Japanese Relations*, 240–245.



Also during early 2001, a “new thinking” on Sino-Japanese relations invigorated popular debate in China. An article by commentator Ma Licheng in the *Renmin Ribao*, “New Thinking on Relations with Japan,” urged China to abandon its blame-mongering and promote a new era of positive relations, in which China would take the high ground by forgiving Japan and moving beyond the shame of the past.<sup>114</sup> He proposed that China show sincere gratitude for ODA received and embrace Japan’s evolving military and peacekeeping roles for their contribution to regional stability. Ma also argued for finding common ground and recognizing Japan as a peaceful nation since the war. Professor Shi Yinhong, of Beijing’s People’s University, echoed these sentiments, exhorting China to act magnanimously, forego history debates, and strengthen ties with Japan to counter the rising influence of the United States.

Believing that fear of Japan’s militarism was greatly exaggerated, Shi asserted Japan should be recognized as a world power with appropriate influence and given a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The reaction among Chinese activists was explosive. Ma and Shi were condemned as traitors to China. The Chinese central authority authorized only minimal discussion on the subject, and debates among scholars, students, and the public were mainly consigned to newspaper articles, magazines, and the Internet. To avoid arousing domestic anxiety and criticism, Beijing elites distanced themselves from the new thinking, affirming that Chinese diplomacy with Japan had not changed. Nevertheless, Beijing quietly and cautiously dabbled in the new thinking.

In a 2003 meeting in Saint Petersburg, the Chinese and Japanese heads of state, Hu and Koizumi, skirted problem areas regarding history and announced positive negotiations over joint approaches to epidemics, research on a Chinese high-speed rail

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<sup>114</sup> Peter Hays Gries, “China’s ‘New Thinking’ on Japan,” *China Quarterly* 184 (2005): 831, doi:10.1017/S0305741005000524.

based on the Japanese Shinkansen model, and solidarity against North Korean nuclear proliferation. During the 25th anniversary of the Sino-Japanese Peace and Friendship Treaty, a spokesman from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) praised Japan for aiding the Chinese economy through ODA and supported Japan's growing military power as a natural development after the Cold War, not a sign of "hostile intent" toward China.<sup>115</sup> Despite these developments, popular opinion frustrated a full expression of the new thinking and led to another downturn in relations.<sup>116</sup>

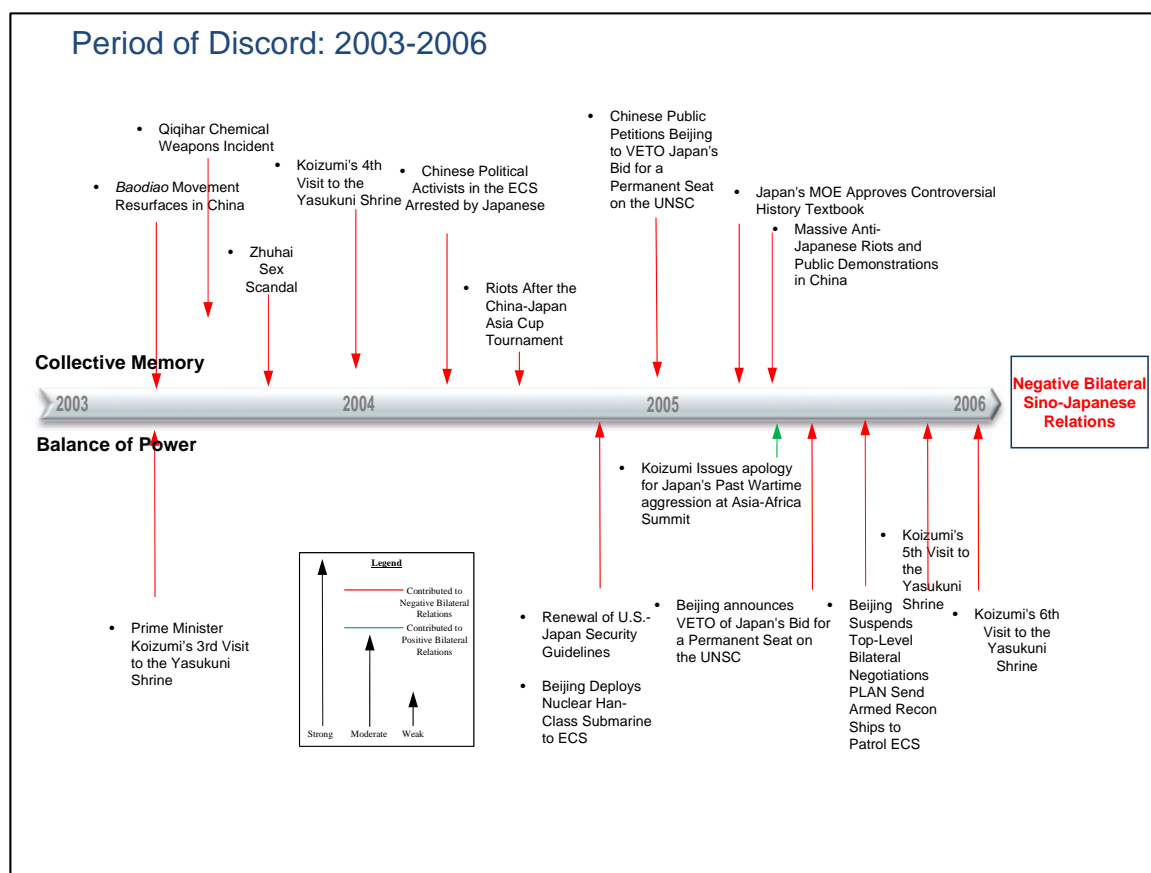
#### **4. Period of Discord (2003–2006): The Weight of Public Opinion**

As depicted in Figure 4, the years 2003–2006 were a period of discord—one of the lowest in recent Sino-Japanese history. Since historical disputes clouded relations for the worse with neither side willing to compromise on history-related matters, Chinese and Japanese heads of state did not visit each other. Meanwhile, massive anti-Japanese demonstrations and protests plagued both countries and undermined Beijing's efforts to craft favorable policies. The Chinese public strongly reacted to perceived slights and demanded the status and respect owed to them.

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<sup>115</sup> Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 206.

<sup>116</sup> Gries, "China's 'New Thinking,'" 831–832, 836–850; Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 205–207.



The collective memories of the Chinese public heavily influenced this period of discord—expressed in uprisings over controversial Japanese events—all of which forced Beijing to harden its policies against Japan and strained Sino-Japanese relations. History-related events are depicted as weak, moderate or strong contributions (arrow sizes) to either positive (green) or negative (red) Sino-Japanese relations. The upper half of the figure depicts events most affected by collective memory (Hypothesis 1). The lower half of the figure depicts events most affected by the balance of power (Hypothesis 2). For this thesis, arrow placement (above or below) was determined by which hypothesis better represented the event.

Figure 4. 2003–2006: Period of Discord

This section provides a brief overview of key events that shaped the negative Sino-Japanese relationship from 2003 to 2006, a period covered in detail in Chapters III and IV. In 2003, the chance unearthing of a WWII Japanese chemical weapon led to a fatality and 37 severe injuries, spurring outrage and demands for victim compensation.<sup>117</sup>

<sup>117</sup> Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 140–145.

In September 2003, 400 Japanese businessmen and 500 Chinese prostitutes reportedly engaged in an scandal in a Zhuhai hotel, attracting considerable media coverage as a modern example of Japan's historical sexual humiliations.<sup>118</sup> Sovereignty disputes in the ECS resurfaced with the return of a stronger *Baodiao* or "defend the Diaoyu Islands" movement, resulting in the arrest and detainment of Chinese activists by Japan's coast guard.<sup>119</sup> In the summer of 2004, anti-Japanese riots broke out after Japan bested China in the Asia Cup soccer tournament.<sup>120</sup> A year later, the approval of a revisionist Japanese textbook, together with the offensive visits by Koizumi to the Yasukuni Shrine and Japan's bid for a permanent seat at the UNSC, induced a crescendo of rioting.<sup>121</sup> These events, along with Chinese allegations of militarism and territorial aggression, severely damaged Sino-Japanese relations.<sup>122</sup>

During this time, the politicization of the Yasukuni Shrine reached an apex that came to symbolize the epitome of the history issue between China and Japan and made the shrine infamous. Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi dismissed China's continual denouncement and protests against his annual visits to the Yasukuni Shrine. Such uncooperative policies by Koizumi forced Beijing to harden its policies against

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<sup>118</sup> "Japanese Orgy in Zhuhai Hotel Sparks Chinese Fury," *China Daily*, September 27, 2003, [www.chinadaily.com.cn/en/doc/2003-09/27/content\\_267962.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/en/doc/2003-09/27/content_267962.htm); Joseph Khan, "China Angered by Reported Orgy Involving Japanese Tourists," *New York Times*, September 30, 2003, [www.nytimes.com/2003/09/30/world/china-angered-by-reported-orgy-involving-japanese-tourists.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/30/world/china-angered-by-reported-orgy-involving-japanese-tourists.html).

<sup>119</sup> In 2003, the *baodiao* movement or "Defend the Diaoyu Islands movement" began to increasingly resurface as an international online social movement to advocate for Chinese sovereignty of the disputed islands against Japan. *Baodiao* activists claim Japan wrongfully claimed sovereignty over the islands after the Sino-Japanese War in the unequal Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895. They echo the current official stance from Beijing and believe the islands have always belonged to China, were never *terra nullius*, never part of Japan's Ryukyu islands chain, and should have been officially recognized as belonging to China after WWII. They also claim that Japan's wrongfully laid territorial claims are connected to an inherent revival of Meiji Era Japanese nationalism and militarism. See the Hong Kong-based Action Committee for Defending the Diaoyu Islands, accessed September 21, 2016, [www.diaoyuislands.org/](http://www.diaoyuislands.org/); James Reilly, "A Wave to Worry About? Public Opinion, Foreign Policy and China's Anti-Japan Protests," *Journal of Contemporary China* 23, no. 86, (2014): 205–208, doi: 10.1080/10670564.2013.832519.

<sup>120</sup> Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 211.

<sup>121</sup> "Thousands in Beijing March Against Japan: Protestors Attach Businesses, Embassy," *Japan Times*, April 10, 2005, [www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2005/04/10/national/thousands-in-beijing-march-against-japan/#.V-5mRpMrLow](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2005/04/10/national/thousands-in-beijing-march-against-japan/#.V-5mRpMrLow); Jim Yardley, "A Hundred Cellphones Bloom, and Chinese Take to the Streets," *New York Times*, April 25, 2005, <http://freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1390813/posts>.

<sup>122</sup> Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 199–214.

Japan, and Chinese officials refused to engage in high-level bilateral negotiations until visits to the shrine were halted. Hence, the Yasukuni Shrine visits significantly increased tensions between the two countries as neither side was willing to give any leeway.

Territorial disputes resurfaced as China became increasingly more assertive in the ECS and political and historical activists like the *Baodiao* movement resurfaced to demand Japan's recognition of China's sovereignty over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. Meanwhile, negotiations on joint operations, research, and exploration in and around the disputed waters depended on Koizumi's decisions regarding the Yasukuni Shrine. Hence, bilateral relations stood still because of historical differences, causing this period of discord to be one of the worst in recent Sino-Japanese history.

### **5. Period of Cooperation (2006–2010): Mending Relations through a Revolving Door of Japanese Leaders**

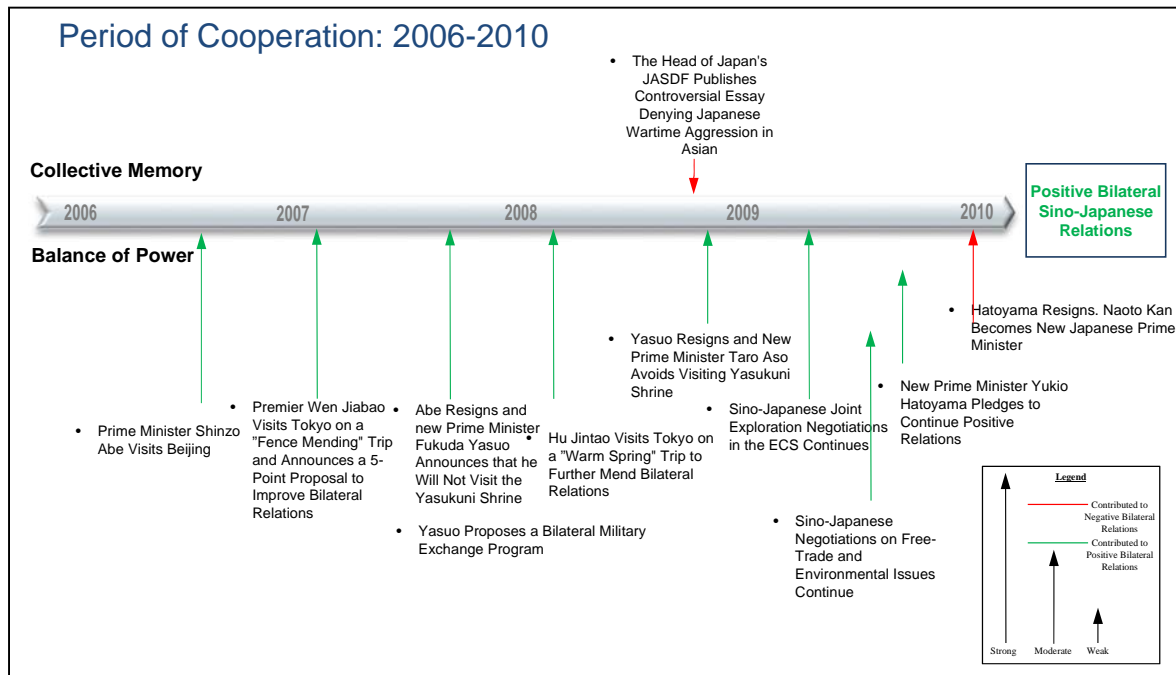
From 2006 to 2010, China and Japan attempted to deescalate tensions to serve national interests, resulting in a more positive regional impact and stronger bilateral relations. After the mayhem of 2005, Chinese propaganda officials were directed to applaud the central government's handling of Japanese relations and frown on student uprisings. Beijing suppressed public protest and approved a media campaign for positive Sino-Japanese relations. The media were to downplay Japan's historical amnesia, remind the public that only a few Japanese officials promoted revisionism, acknowledge Japan as a great power, and emphasize positive interactions.<sup>123</sup>

As shown in Figure 5, this period reflected positive bilateral relations despite the number of changes of Japanese prime ministers. With nearly every leadership change in Japan, each prime minister pledged to promote more positive bilateral relations, and all prime ministers avoided visiting the Yasukuni Shrine during their time in office. Japanese

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<sup>123</sup> Richard Spencer, "China Parades 'The Guilty' to Placate Japan," *Telegraph*, April 27, 2005, <http://freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1391708/posts>; Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 152–153.

leadership took precautions to avoid actions that could arouse anti-Japanese sentiments in China or provoke Beijing to protest. Chinese leadership reciprocated with cooperative actions by resuming high-level negotiations over disputes in the ECS.



Few historical issues negatively affected bilateral relations during this time. This period reflected great cooperation despite the continual changes of prime ministers in Japan. History-related events are depicted as weak, moderate or strong contributions (arrow sizes) to either positive (green) or negative (red) Sino-Japanese relations. The upper half of the figure depicts events most affected by collective memory (Hypothesis 1). The lower half of the figure depicts events most affected by the balance of power (Hypothesis 2). For this thesis, arrow placement (above or below) was determined by which hypothesis better represented the event.

Figure 5. 2006–2010: Period of Cooperation

During this time, Japan took significant steps to improve the relationship and accommodate China's requests regarding sensitive history issues. In 2006, in a show of genuine resolve to improve relations, the incoming prime minister, Shinzo Abe, departed from the traditional practice of a symbolic first visit to Washington, D.C., and visited

Beijing instead.<sup>124</sup> In February 2007, Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing called for the resolution of territorial disputes and described Beijing's vision for the ECS as replete with Sino-Japanese "peace, cooperation, and friendship."<sup>125</sup> On a fence-mending trip in April 2007, Premier Wen Jiabao proposed a five-point plan for improving relations, with grievance resolution playing no part.<sup>126</sup> Fukuda Yasuo, who became prime minister after Abe's resignation in 2007, announced he would not visit the Yasukuni Shrine and commenced a friendly military exchange program with China. The Chinese invited Japanese self-defense personnel to observe military exercises, and the Japanese government welcomed an armed Chinese destroyer to Tokyo harbor.

In 2008, Hu Jintao visited Tokyo on what he called a "warm spring for the friendship between two peoples."<sup>127</sup> During the visit, Hu cited the two-thousand-year amicable history of the Chinese and Japanese peoples, interrupted briefly by the wars that took place from 1894 through 1945.<sup>128</sup> In September 2008, Taro Aso vowed to avoid the Yasukuni Shrine as Japan's new prime minister and highlighted the importance of sound Sino-Japanese relations. In 2009, the head of Japan's air self-defense force (JASDF) was forced to resign, forego a month's pay, and renounce his retirement pension for an essay in which he outlined a legal justification for the occupation of China and denied Japanese brutality. In response to Chinese clamor, Aso declared that his nation would make a concerted effort to understand its past.

In 2009, the countries made progress on joint exploration and operations in the ECS, free-trade negotiations, and climate and health agreements. In late 2009, Aso's successor as prime minister, Yukio Hatoyama, pledged to promote the current trajectory

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<sup>124</sup> Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 219.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Raviprasad Narayanan, "ISDA Comment: Sino-Japanese Relations and the 'Wen Jiabao effect,'" Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, April 20, 2007, [www.idsa.in/idsastrategiccomments/SinoJapaneseRelationsandtheWenJiabaoeffect\\_RNarayanan\\_200407](http://www.idsa.in/idsastrategiccomments/SinoJapaneseRelationsandtheWenJiabaoeffect_RNarayanan_200407).

<sup>127</sup> "Chinese President Begins 'Warm Spring' Trip to Japan," *Xinhua*, May 6, 2008, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-05/06/content\\_8114044.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-05/06/content_8114044.htm).

<sup>128</sup> "Chinese President's Upcoming Japan Visit to be one in 'Warm Spring,'" *Xinhua*, May, 4, 2008, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-05/04/content\\_8101665.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-05/04/content_8101665.htm).

of affirmative Sino-Japanese relations, though financial scandals and ineffectiveness led to his resignation nine months later. Hatoyama was succeeded by Naoto Kan in 2010.<sup>129</sup>

Despite Japan's rapid political shifts, with its head of government changing five times in four years, every prime minister from 2006 to 2010 avoided the Yasukuni Shrine and sought better relations with China. In return, Chinese leaders suppressed anti-Japanese uprisings, avoided historical disputes, and praised the benefits of cooperation. This determined civility was interrupted, however, by rising historical and political activism and aggressive military actions in the ECS.

## **6. Period of Discord (2010–2016): Struggle in the East China Sea**

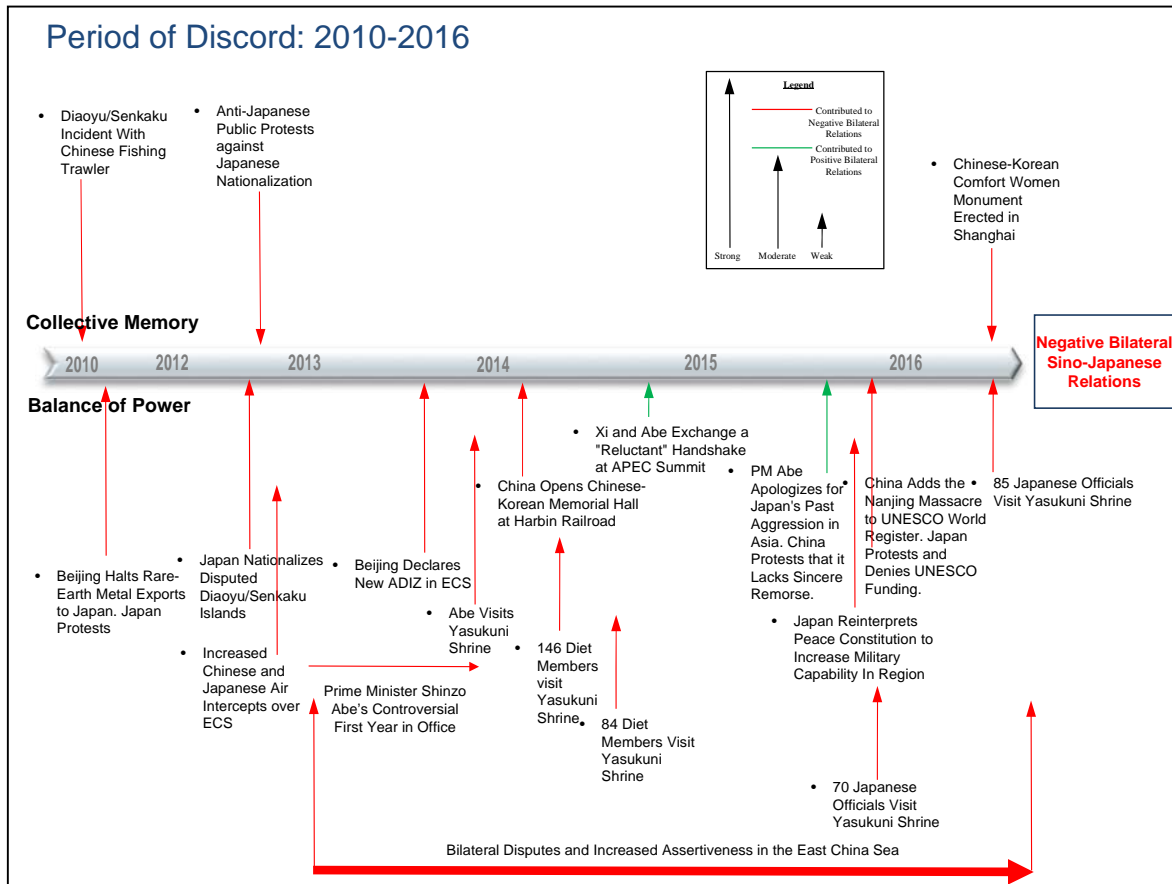
Sino-Japanese tensions increased in 2010–2016, creating a discordant relationship that—as China gained in military and diplomatic muscle during this period—alarmed its Asian neighbors. Japan strongly criticized China's lack of transparency over its military buildup and described China's new capabilities as a threat to regional security. Meanwhile, the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute sparked massive protests in China. Beijing exponentially increased its sea and air incursions into Japanese territorial areas and declared a Chinese air-defense identification zone (ADIZ) that overlapped Japanese airspace, which caused Sino-Japanese relations to become more confrontational in the ECS. These moves were justified by an alleged need to counter the suspected nationalism and right-wing policies of the Japanese government.<sup>130</sup> As shown in in Figure 6 and explained in detail in Chapters III and IV, all of these events forced Beijing to harden its policies against Japan, which contributed to the downfall of relations during this time.

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<sup>129</sup> Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 215–233.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 233–246, 309–319.





Sino-Japanese relations reached another low, beginning with events in the ECS in 2010 and escalating in 2012 with Japan's nationalization of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, and continued its trajectory of discord through 2016. History-related events are depicted as weak, moderate or strong contributions (arrow sizes) to either positive (green) or negative (red) Sino-Japanese relations. The upper half of the figure depicts events most affected by collective memory (Hypothesis 1). The lower half of the figure depicts events most affected by the balance of power (Hypothesis 2). For this thesis, arrow placement (above or below) was determined by which hypothesis better represented the event.

Figure 6. 2010–2016: Period of Discord

In 2010, the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute gained traction as China's movements in the ECS grew increasingly bold. To break Japanese administrative control, China asserted rights around Japanese contiguous waters. The conflict reached a climax on September 7, 2010, when the Japanese coast guard arrested a Chinese fishing-boat captain for operating in Japanese waters and ramming two Japanese ships, causing significant

damage. Protests broke out in Beijing and parts of Japan as Chinese officials demanded the unconditional release of the captain, a public apology for the arrest, and compensation for damages to the fishing trawler. Ma Zhaoxu, a spokesman for the foreign ministry, charged Japan with the illegal arrest of a Chinese citizen acting lawfully in Chinese territory, stating that the islands “have been China’s inherent territory since ancient times.”<sup>131</sup> Prime Minister Naoto Kan refused to accommodate these demands and authorized Japanese legal jurisdiction in the case. Beijing dispatched a law enforcement ship to the islands to protect Chinese fishing interests and halted rare earth–metal exports to Japan to pressure Kan toward a satisfactory resolution. The captain was released on September 25, but Kan was derided for his handling of the incident by Chinese and domestic opponents. Forced to apologize, Kan appealed to his constituents by defending Japanese sovereignty and blaming China for injuring the Sino-Japanese relationship.<sup>132</sup>

China used the economic leverage of its monopoly on rare earth metals and the psychological support of protestors versed in the evils of Japan to resolve the conflict to its advantage and justify increased patrols in disputed waters. This affair, coupled with criticism over the 2011 triple disaster in Japan,<sup>133</sup> humiliated the inexperienced Kan and led to his resignation.<sup>134</sup> Hence, historical disputes in the ECS affected economic trade negotiations, which brought bilateral relations to another low.

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<sup>131</sup> James J. Przystup, “Japan-China Relations: Troubled Waters: Part II,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies: Comparative Connections* 12, no. 4 (January 2011), [www.csis.org/programs/pacific-forum-csis/publications/comparative-connections/volume-12-2010/vol-12-no-4-january](http://www.csis.org/programs/pacific-forum-csis/publications/comparative-connections/volume-12-2010/vol-12-no-4-january).

<sup>132</sup> James J. Przystup, “Japan-China Relations: Troubled Waters,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies: Comparative Connections* 12, no. 3 (October 2010), [www.csis.org/programs/pacific-forum-csis/publications/comparative-connections/volume-12-2010/vol-12-no-3-october](http://www.csis.org/programs/pacific-forum-csis/publications/comparative-connections/volume-12-2010/vol-12-no-3-october); Przystup, “Troubled Waters: Part II.”

<sup>133</sup> The triple disaster refers to the Earthquake, Tsunami, and Nuclear Facility Meltdown at the Fukushima Dai-Ichi plant that took place on the east coast of Japan, near Tokyo in March 2011 resulting in one of the worst nuclear disasters since Chernobyl in 1986. David Pacchioli, “Japan’s Triple Disaster: Earthquake and Tsunami Led to the Release of Radioisotopes,” *Oceanus Magazine*, April 25, 2013, [www.whoi.edu/oceanus/feature/japan-triple-disaster](http://www.whoi.edu/oceanus/feature/japan-triple-disaster).

<sup>134</sup> Toko Sekiguchi, “Japan’s Kan Steps Down as Party Chief,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 27, 2011, [www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424053111904787404576531370856823808](http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424053111904787404576531370856823808).

Yoshihiko Noda took over as prime minister in 2011, and tensions only increased. In 2012, the purchase and nationalization of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands by Japan precipitated bellicose Chinese actions in the ECS and ignited massive riots in China. Within three months of the purchase, Beijing deployed Chinese maritime surveillance ships, fishing-enforcement assets, and PLAN warships to actively patrol the ECS over 17 times to break Japanese administrative control over the disputed islands.<sup>135</sup> Since the 2012 Japanese nationalization of the islands, China has deployed assets to patrol and conduct operations in the disputed waters on a continual basis, forcing Japan to respond more aggressively to assert its sovereignty over the islands. However, in part due to his administration's debacle over the 2012 nationalization of the islands, Noda resigned and Shinzo Abe succeeded him.<sup>136</sup> After 2012, historical grievances only exacerbated Sino-Japanese tensions in the ECS, strongly contributing to the downturn of bilateral relations in the period.

Historical and territorial disputes remained at the forefront during 2013–2016 under Abe's leadership. The prime minister's nationalist and revisionist leanings, along with his visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, gave new life to historical grievances. China renewed its demands for a heartfelt apology and grew increasingly provocative in the ECS. By portraying Japanese activity in the region as resurgently militaristic, China was able to justify its stated need to defend Chinese national interests and check Japanese power, all the while bruising Japanese credibility. China's incursions into disputed waters kept Japan anxious and its defense forces on edge. Both sides increased their defense

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<sup>135</sup> James J. Przystup, "Japan-China Relations: 40th Anniversary: Fuggetaboutit!" *Center for Strategic and International Studies: Comparative Connections* 14, no. 3 (January 2013), [www.csis.org/programs/pacific-forum-csis/publications/comparative-connections/volume-14-2012/vol-14-no-3-january](http://www.csis.org/programs/pacific-forum-csis/publications/comparative-connections/volume-14-2012/vol-14-no-3-january).

<sup>136</sup> Jeremy L. Wallace and Jessica Chen Weiss, "The Political Geography of Nationalist Protest in China: Cities and the 2012 Anti-Japanese Protests," *China Quarterly* 222, (June 2015): 405–406, 413–416, doi: 10.1017/S030574105000417; Martin Fackler, "Japan's Premier Resigns, Making Way for a Predecessor," *New York Times*, December 25, 2012, [www.nytimes.com/2012/12/26/world/asia/japans-prime-minister-resigns-making-way-for-shinzoabe.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FNoda%2C%20Yoshihiko&action=click&contentCollection=timestopics&region=stream&module=stream\\_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=1&pgtype=collection](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/26/world/asia/japans-prime-minister-resigns-making-way-for-shinzoabe.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FNoda%2C%20Yoshihiko&action=click&contentCollection=timestopics&region=stream&module=stream_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=1&pgtype=collection).

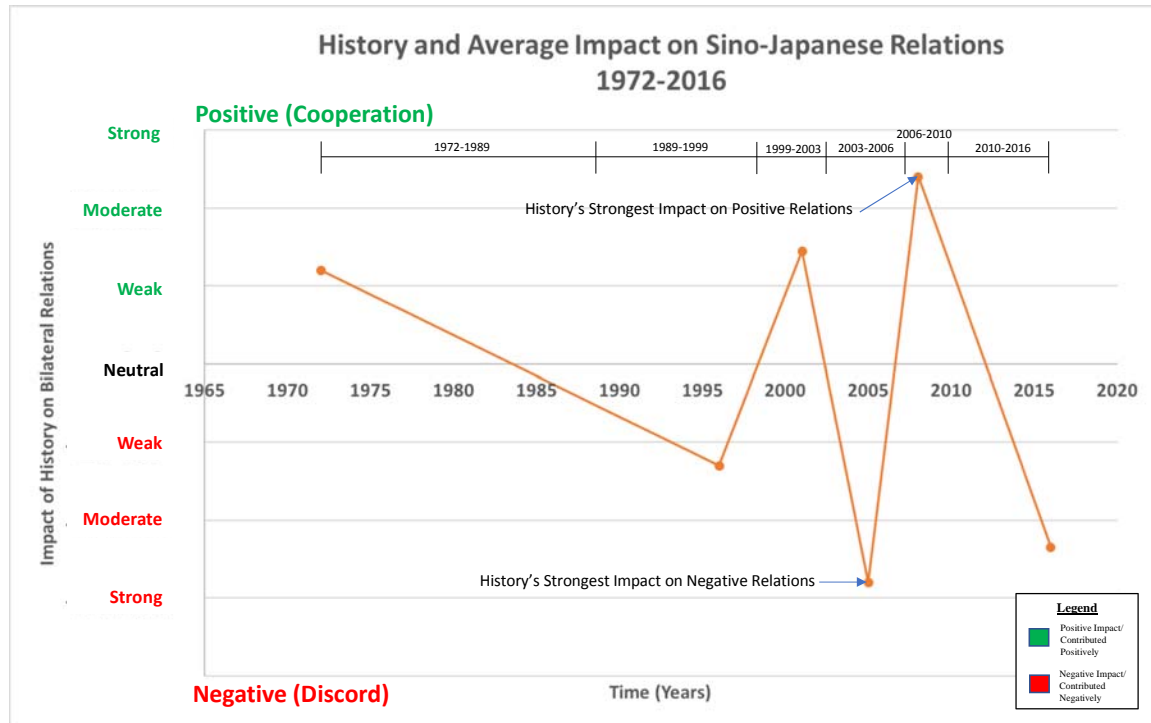
budgets yearly to update their military and security postures, worsening the regional standoff.<sup>137</sup>

### C. CONCLUSION

Since their postwar resumption of diplomacy in 1972, China and Japan have lurched from highs to lows of harmony and discord, with history ever present. Figure 7 shows an overall assessment of the information collected by calculating the average assessments of weak, moderate, or strong impacts on Sino-Japanese relations within six divided periods from 1972 to 2016. This figure plots and graphs the average of each of the time periods—three periods of positive bilateral relations (1972–1989, 1999–2003, 2006–2010) and three periods negative relations (1989–1999, 2003–2006, 2010–2016)—to determine when history had the strongest influence on positive and negative relations.

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<sup>137</sup> James J. Przystup, “Japan-China Relations: Treading Troubled Waters,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies: Comparative Connections* 15, No. 1 (May 2013), [www.csis.org/programs/pacific-forum-csis/publications/comparative-connections/volume-15-2013/vol-15-no-1-may-2013](http://www.csis.org/programs/pacific-forum-csis/publications/comparative-connections/volume-15-2013/vol-15-no-1-may-2013); James J. Przystup, “Japan-China Relations: Can We Talk?” *Center for Strategic and International Studies: Comparative Connections* 15, no. 3 (January 2014), [www.csis.org/programs/pacific-forum-csis/publications/comparative-connections/volume-15-2013/vol-15-no-3-january](http://www.csis.org/programs/pacific-forum-csis/publications/comparative-connections/volume-15-2013/vol-15-no-3-january); James Przystup, “Japan-China Relations: Past as Prologue,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies: Comparative Connections* 16, no. 1 (May 2014), [www.csis.org/programs/pacific-forum-csis/publications/comparative-connections/volume-16-2014/vol-16-no-1-may-2014](http://www.csis.org/programs/pacific-forum-csis/publications/comparative-connections/volume-16-2014/vol-16-no-1-may-2014); James J. Przystup, “Japan-China Relations: Gaining Traction,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies: Comparative Connections* 17, no. 1 (May 2015), [www.csis.org/programs/pacific-forum-csis/publications/comparative-connections/volume-17-2015/vol-17-no-1-may-2015](http://www.csis.org/programs/pacific-forum-csis/publications/comparative-connections/volume-17-2015/vol-17-no-1-may-2015); James J. Przystup, “Japan-China Relations: To August 15—Toward September 3,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies: Comparative Connections* 17, no. 2 (September 2015), [www.csis.org/programs/pacific-forum-csis/publications/comparative-connections/volume-17-2015/vol-17-no-2](http://www.csis.org/programs/pacific-forum-csis/publications/comparative-connections/volume-17-2015/vol-17-no-2); James J. Przystup, “Japan-China Relations: Moving in the Right Direction,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies: Comparative Connections* 17, no. 3 (January 2016), [www.csis.org/programs/pacific-forum-csis/publications/comparative-connections/volume-17-2015/vol-17-no-3-january](http://www.csis.org/programs/pacific-forum-csis/publications/comparative-connections/volume-17-2015/vol-17-no-3-january); James J. Przystup, “Japan-China Relations: No Lack of Dialogue, Results—TBD,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies: Comparative Connections* 18, no. 2 (September 2016), [www.csis.org/programs/pacific-forum-csis/publications/comparative-connections/volume-18-2016/vol-18-no-2](http://www.csis.org/programs/pacific-forum-csis/publications/comparative-connections/volume-18-2016/vol-18-no-2).



This represents the average impact of history on Sino-Japanese relations from the beginning of official diplomatic normalization in 1972 to 2016.

Figure 7. The Role of History in Explaining Positive and Negative Sino-Japanese Relations

From 1972 to 2016, China and Japan experienced six periods of highs and lows, three cooperative and three discordant. Sino-Japanese relations began with a strong period of cooperation from 1972 to 1989, when normalization of relations minimized historical grievances. This period of strategic and security alliances against the Soviet Union and collaborations kick-started China's economy and opened new markets for Japan. Though divided by irreconcilable accounts of their shared history, both parties set differences aside and prioritized shared benefits over settling past wrongs.

However, the brutal 1989 CCP repression of protestors in Tiananmen Square, the fall of Communist Europe, and the end of the Cold War compelled China to defend the legitimacy of Beijing's Communist government and removed the restraints of maintaining positive relations to support security interests against the Soviet Union. This led to a period of discord from 1989 to 1999 when controversial Japanese actions

resurrected anti-Japanese sentiments in China that were supported by anti-Japanese rhetoric against the century of humiliation, encouraging vigorous Chinese nationalism over goodwill and cooperation with Japan. For its part, Japan's rising nationalism, inspired partly in reaction to Chinese contempt, conflicted with China's objectives and self-interest. Hence, the period after the Cold War and Tiananmen Square saw greater conflict, diverging interests, a refusal to reconcile or ignore differences in favor of practical objectives, and a deliberate resurrection of the animosity between Beijing and Tokyo.

In the wake of this negative period, bilateral relations briefly surged upward with a new thinking in Beijing that moved beyond blame and supported long-term national interests. Thus, bilateral relations swung back toward cooperation from 1999 to 2003 when leaders at the highest levels on both sides set aside historical differences to support national interests and economic cooperation. Other than Koizumi's Yasukuni Shrine visits, Japan compromised on actions to quell major anti-Japanese sentiments. Meanwhile, China's "new thinking" gave life to the idea of fully accepting Japanese remorse for its past wartime aggression and removing the history blockade that prevented bilateral cooperation. However, this period of cooperation was short lived.

From 2003 to 2006, Japanese controversial actions—like the visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, territorial disputes, and chemical weapons incidents—brought out anti-Japanese fervor and a downturn of relations. Domestic uprisings overshadowed the effort to regain cooperative relations. Beijing was also compelled to harden its policies against Japan to address domestic anti-Japanese sentiments and contain any Japanese ambitions of increased influence or power in the region. As shown in Figure 7, Japan's controversial actions and China's historical grievances consumed bilateral relations, resulting in the lowest period of discord in recent Sino-Japanese history.

However, leadership changes in Japan beginning in 2006 allowed each country to reset relations for the better as each successive Japanese prime minister resolved to promote positive Sino-Japanese relations. Meanwhile, Chinese leadership at the highest levels set aside historical grievances and promoted positive Sino-Japanese relations while anti-Japanese public opinion and collective memory rarely impeded either country.

Figure 7 shows that bilateral relations transitioned from the lowest period of discord (2003-2006) to the highest period of cooperation (2006-2010). Positive relations reached its highest average during this time period as a result of the strong cooperative initiatives on both sides to satisfactorily address historical grievances.

However, by 2010, territorial disputes became increasingly and integrally linked to historical grievances. Disputes in the ECS reinvigorated historical disputes between China and Japan, breaking the period of cooperative Sino-Japanese relations and setting a trajectory of discord. From 2010–2016, historical grievances dominated bilateral relations, permeated high-level negotiations (or lack thereof), hampered economic trade agreements, exacerbated tensions in the ECS, and triggered the traumatic collective memories of the nation. Hence, history played a significant part explaining the downturn of bilateral relations that remain unresolved as of 2017.

This thesis assumes that downplaying or setting aside historical grievances for national interests or refraining from actions that trigger China's historical sensitivities enable cooperative bilateral relations. Hence, subsequent analysis focuses only on the three periods of discord: (1989–1999, 2003–2006, 2010–2016) to determine the strength of the two proposed hypotheses in characterizing Sino-Japanese relations: (1) activation of collective remembrance and public opinion and (2) the government use of history to gain relative power over Japan. The following two chapters will assess the strength of historical grievances through the eyes of the Chinese people, and China's central authoritarian government and how they have influenced Sino-Japanese relations for the worse.

### **III. COLLECTIVE MEMORY AND ANTI-JAPANESE PUBLIC OPINION**

This chapter confirms that the collective memories of Chinese citizens shape an anti-Japanese public opinion that negatively affects Sino-Japanese foreign policy and domestic relations. Provocative Japanese actions ignite Chinese public opinion and spur public uprisings that demand (1) Beijing act more aggressively in its foreign policy against Japan, even if such action is not in the best interest of CCP politics and that (2) Japan take action to quell Chinese public dissent or acquiesce to CCP demands. Anti-Japanese sentiments in China are mostly the result of the collective memories of Japanese atrocities; however, China's patriotic education campaign has further entrenched existing anti-Japanese sentiments and reinforced a pervasive or persistent anti-Japanese national identity. Hence, deeply embedded resentment of the Chinese people and mass mobilization of public nationalism—intensified by Beijing's propaganda—has influenced politics at both national and international levels, and contributed to the downturn of Sino-Japanese relations. As a result, debates over the history issue extend beyond state-driven policies or manipulation of Sino-Japanese foreign policy to serve national interests, but rather history is a deeply felt, genuine emotional sentiment that remains resilient within the psyche of the population.

A review of specific events involving public opinion during the three periods of discord (1989–1999, 2003–2006, 2010–2016) reveals provocative Japanese behavior stirs collective memories of Chinese citizens and provokes angst and criticism of Japanese politics. This explains why anti-Japanese collective remembrance in China during periods of cooperation remain relatively latent due to Japan's willingness to both accommodate China's desires regarding history and avoid provocative actions that could reignite such sentiments. Although anti-Japanese collective memory emerged during all three negative periods, as shown in Figures 8, 9, and 10, it played a comparatively moderate role in the first period (1989–1999), a strong role in the second period (2003–2006), and a weak role in the third period (2010–2016) in explaining the downturn of bilateral relations. This chapter scrutinizes specific events during each of the main periods of Sino-Japanese



discord to assess how provocative Japanese actions reinvigorate anti-Japanese public opinion and further contribute to negative bilateral relations.

#### **A. AN ANTI-JAPANESE NATIONAL IDENTITY**

Anti-Japanese public opinion stems from a cultural transmission of collective experiences passed down from previous generations and is reinforced by China's patriotic education campaign, which is rich with anti-Japanese propaganda. In some instances, both anti-Japanese collective memory and Beijing's propaganda have become mutually reinforcing to serve common interests. Current generations that have had no personal experience of China's past wartime events relive these events through collective memories that are passed down from generation to generation. This constructivist paradigm of collective memories creates a unified national identity that links the past, present, and future, and validates the existence or evolution of a community.<sup>138</sup> Eric Langenbacker notes that collective identity is based on the memories of the people and history the people have experienced.<sup>139</sup> Such memories and histories have evolved over time "to explain who people are today and what they stand for"<sup>140</sup> and "'where' [they] came from, and why."<sup>141</sup> Most notably, Langenbacker explains that wartime atrocities and traumatic histories disrupt the peaceful evolution of a society's collective memory.<sup>142</sup> Such a disruption has a great impact on how a society remembers its history as it can highlight the constant need for security to prevent future trauma.<sup>143</sup> Thus, the negative and traumatic collective memories that a society experiences create a specific social identity, which bonds a society to a traumatic narrative that is adopted by the nation.

China's traumatic collective memories create an identity of China as being a "victim" of past Japanese imperial aggression and as a "victor" led by the CCP in

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<sup>138</sup> Langenbacker, "Collective Memory as a Factor," 22, 25–27.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 21–22.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 21–22.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

defeating such aggression.<sup>144</sup> This somewhat paradoxical identity results in biased anti-Japanese sentiments that are passed down from generation to generation and pervade Chinese culture. Thus, anti-Japanese public opinion within the Chinese people's collective memories has subconscious input at the highest level, and this opinion shapes China's Japan policy.

Although collective memory and identity establish the core of anti-Japanese public opinion, China's patriotic education campaign of the 1990s planted the fateful seeds of long-term anti-Japanese sentiments that have reinforced deep suspicion and resentment of Japanese past wrongdoings for generations thereafter. In many respects, China's traumatic experiences are legitimized by this campaign and vice versa. On the one hand, the Chinese public gains a powerful voice to reconcile, legitimize, justify, and support their deepest concerns regarding past trauma. On the other hand, Beijing's patriotic education campaign reflects a perceived truth that is legitimized by the people's remembrance of history. Zheng Wang argues that the Chinese patriotic education campaign used its collective memories to justify the CCP's legitimacy of rule through mandatory history education for what he called "glorification of the party [and] consolidation of national identity . . . in the post-Tiananmen and post-Cold War eras."<sup>145</sup> Hence, the Chinese public show little resistance to the campaign's mandatory initiatives, laden with anti-Japanese rhetoric, and the creation of over 100 new historic patriotic education sites with educational field trips for students to learn about Japan's wartime brutalities.<sup>146</sup> This campaign exacerbates what Shogo Suzuki claims is an already embedded anti-Japanese national identity and what Allen S. Whiting describes as a culture sensitive to the history issue and any perceived slights by the Japanese.<sup>147</sup> Such

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<sup>144</sup> Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 95–141.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>146</sup> In March 1995, at the beginning of the Patriotic Education Campaign, the Chinese Ministry of Affairs announced that it would construct 100 public historical remembrance sites honoring China's 100 years of National Humiliation by Western Powers and the Japanese. Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 105–110.

<sup>147</sup> Suzuki, "The Importance of 'Othering,'" 26, 28, 31–32; Whiting, *China Eyes Japan*, 19, 28, 37, 41–42.

propaganda has deepened an anti-Japanese collective national identity in China that is now manifested in anti-Japanese biases and seen in the Chinese public's need to continually criticize Japan's inability to "properly" remember wartime atrocities.<sup>148</sup> Thus, the Chinese people's collective memories, supplemented and strengthened by Beijing's patriotic education campaign, have been contributing factors to specific history issue incidences during the three main periods of Sino-Japanese discord discussed in this chapter.

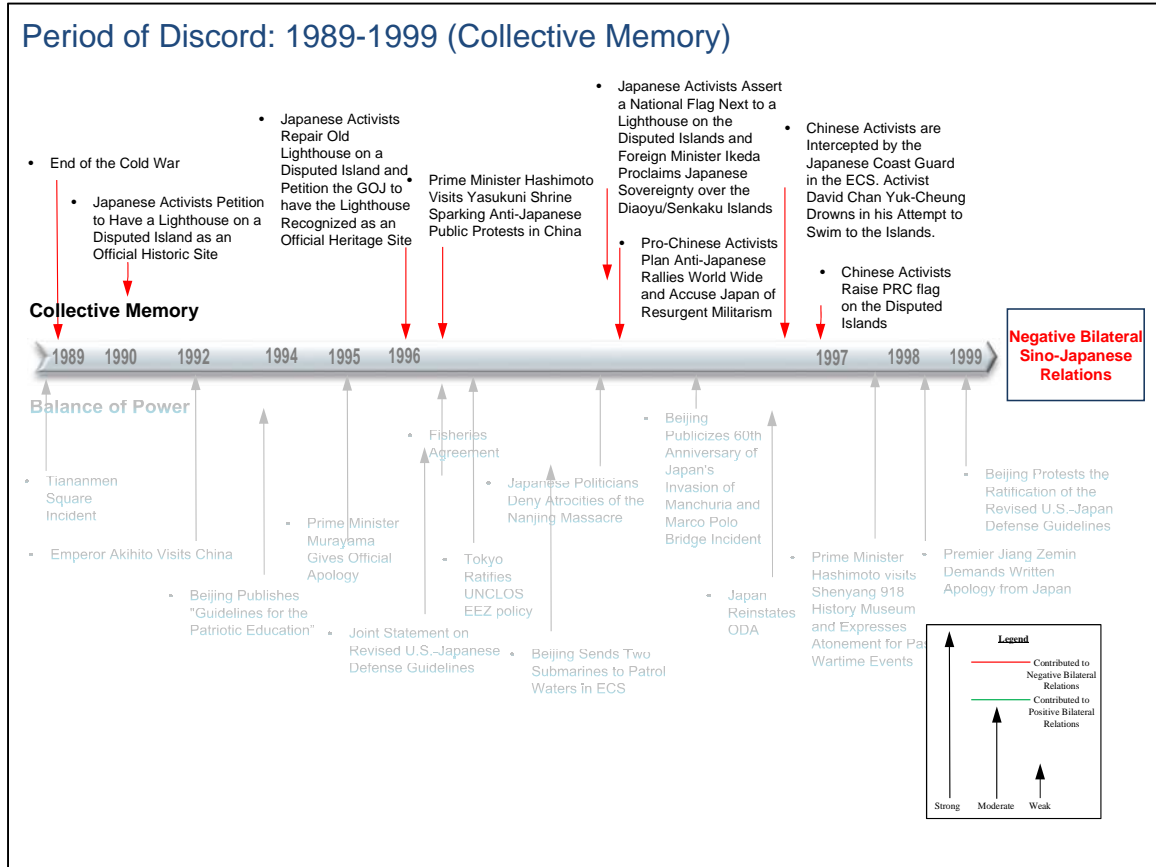
## **B. PERIOD OF DISCORD: 1989–1999**

Following the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square incident and the fall of communism in Europe in 1989, Sino-Japanese relations started to gradually change for the worse, but such change did not become fully apparent until 1996. Both events caused a CCP regime legitimacy crisis that threatened to take down the central authoritarian government in China. In addition, China began to increase its defense spending with the purchase of Russian weapons systems to build a capable blue-water navy and performed a series of ongoing military exercises and missile tests in the Taiwan Straits area. Concurrently, Chinese elites continued to demand Japanese contrition for Japan's past wartime conduct as China's propaganda campaign began to encourage its younger generations to become more nationalistic. As depicted in Figure 8, this thesis reviews two main Sino-Japanese history issues during this time period that have stirred national anti-Japanese sentiments and were contributing factors to negative Sino-Japanese relations: the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands disputes and the Yasukuni Shrine visit by Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto.<sup>149</sup> Bilateral relations reached a low period of cooperation because of these historical disputes.

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<sup>148</sup> Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 56–57.

<sup>149</sup> Yahuda, *Two Tigers*, 24–36.



Collective memory had a moderate role in explaining the downturn of bilateral relations during this time. History-related events are depicted as weak, moderate or strong contributions (arrow sizes) to either positive (green) or negative (red) Sino-Japanese relations. The upper half of the figure depicts events most affected by collective memory (Hypothesis 1). The lower half of the figure depicts events most affected by the balance of power (Hypothesis 2). For this thesis, arrow placement (above or below) was determined by which hypothesis better represented the event.

Figure 8. Period of Discord: 1989–1999 (Collective Memory)

## 1. Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands Dispute in 1996

The year 1996 was tense for Sino-Japanese relations. A third Taiwan Strait crisis, the Chinese underground nuclear weapons test,<sup>150</sup> volatile Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands disputes, and the renewed U.S.-Japan bilateral security guidelines all strained Sino-

<sup>150</sup> Seth Faison, "China Sets Off Nuclear Test, Then Announces Moratorium," *New York Times*, July 30, 1996, [www.nytimes.com/1996/07/30/world/china-sets-off-nuclear-test-then-announces-moratorium.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/1996/07/30/world/china-sets-off-nuclear-test-then-announces-moratorium.html?_r=0).

Japanese relations. In addition, China perceived Japan's desire for expansion of military roles, revised defense guidelines, and Japan's research into BMD systems as a Chinese containment strategy by Japan and its strongest ally—the United States.<sup>151</sup> However, the key event related to the history issue that stirred massive anti-Japanese sentiments and contributed to the downturn of Sino-Japanese relations was the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute of 1996.

Actions initiated by Japanese right-wing political activists who were openly defended by the Japanese government became the impetus for reengaging in Sino-Japanese territorial disputes during this period. In July 1996, a Japanese right-wing youth federation traveled to the disputed islands to reconstruct and repair an old Japanese lighthouse. Afterward, the Japanese activists petitioned to have the lighthouse as an official Japanese heritage site, thereby asserting that Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands be officially recognized as belonging to Japan. In August, another Japanese right-wing group marked the lighthouse with a Japanese flag. Immediately afterward, Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda publicly claimed that the “Senkakus have always been Japan's territory. Japan effectively governs the islands, so the territorial issues does not exist.”<sup>152</sup> Pro-Chinese activists openly protested Japan's claims to the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, and rallies began sprouting up with demonstrations and street marches in New York, Vancouver, Hong Kong, and San Francisco.<sup>153</sup> Chinese political activists called on Beijing to send the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and increase its maritime presence to enforce China's claim to the islands.<sup>154</sup> For China, the public has associated the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute with accusations of resurgent Japanese militarism and an

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<sup>151</sup> Garrett and Glaser, “Chinese Apprehension,” 384–385, 388; Christensen, “Security Dilemma in East Asia,” 51–64.

<sup>152</sup> Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda as quoted by James Reilly. Reilly, “Wave to Worry About?” 204.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 193.

inherent desire to renew Japan's East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.<sup>155</sup> During this same time, Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto visited the controversial Yasukuni Shrine and paid homage to the Japanese war criminals responsible for Japan's invasion of China. In this case, both Japanese and Chinese political activists forced each other's respective governments to renew the history issue and act more aggressively in their claims to the disputed territory, explaining the deterioration of relations during this period.<sup>156</sup>

The Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute continued to strain bilateral relations as Chinese activists reinforced Chinese territorial claims, which unleashed anti-Japanese fervor. On September 22, 18 Chinese activists and 42 reporters traveled from Hong Kong and Taiwan to "reclaim" the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. Japanese coast guard ships intercepted the Chinese vessel and prevented it from landing on the islands. In a desperate attempt to circumvent the Japanese patrol boats, Chinese activists jumped into the ECS and attempted to swim to the islands. After several attempts, one Chinese activist, David Chan Yuk-Cheung, drowned. Thousands of people came out to Victoria Park, Hong Kong, and held a candlelight vigil to mourn his death.<sup>157</sup> Inspired by the events in September, Chinese activists boarded another vessel and on October 6, 1996, raised the PRC flag, proclaiming that "The Diaoyu Islands are Chinese (*zhongguo*) sovereign territory."<sup>158</sup> Hence, anti-Japanese public opinion encouraged activists to go beyond government-sanctioned events to address related history issue controversies.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Japan's East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere was used to justify Japan's invasion and colonization of Asia before and during World War II. The Chinese public associates this program with Japan's past militarization and brutal aggression in Asia. In terms of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute, the Japanese claim of these islands officially began after the end of the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 in what China considers was an unfair treaty and should have been returned to China after Japan's loss of World War II. Thus, the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute is considered a related Sino-Japanese history issue. Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 189.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 193–195.

<sup>157</sup> "Thousands Mourn Drowned Protester," *Chicago Tribune*, September 30, 1996, [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1996-09-30/news/9609300156\\_1\\_hong-kong-pro-democracy-protest](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1996-09-30/news/9609300156_1_hong-kong-pro-democracy-protest).

<sup>158</sup> Reilly, "Wave to Worry About?" 204; Senkaku/Diaoyutai Islands—Chronology, GlobalSecurity.org., accessed September 19, 2016. [www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/senkaku-chronology.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/senkaku-chronology.htm).

<sup>159</sup> Reilly, "Wave to Worry About?" 204.

Although the PLA sent two submarines to patrol the waters around the disputed islands, Beijing's response to the incidents involving the disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands in 1996 was more moderate and relatively restrained in its policies or demands on Japan. The Chinese central authority required that the media lessen its anti-Japanese rhetoric. Local officials held town meetings to quell anti-Japanese protests. University administrators and professors had to discourage student protests. The Chinese foreign ministry also denied a Hong Kong-based political activist group permission to organize a large-scale petition and protest. Evidence also suggests that Beijing's temperate response to public protests was primarily due to concerns over bilateral trade relations; 1996 was also the year China became Japan's largest trading partner.<sup>160</sup> The following year, improved Sino-Japanese relations allowed for the approval of a new fisheries agreement in the contested waters. Erica Downs and Phillip Saunders noted that the "Chinese government proved willing to incur significant damage to its nationalist credentials by following restrained policies and cooperating with the Japanese government to prevent the territorial disputes from harming bilateral relations. When forced to choose, Chinese leaders pursued economic development at the expense of nationalist goals."<sup>161</sup> Public protests regarding the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands in 1996 moderately influenced Beijing's and Tokyo's policies toward each other. In this case, evidence supports Beijing's desire to prevent both the protests from becoming critical of the central government's handling of the issue and the dispute from significantly harming the current economic benefits of the bilateral Sino-Japanese relation. Hence, in this case, the islands disputes overall only contributed moderately to the dip in bilateral relations.<sup>162</sup>

## **2. Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto's "Personal" Visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, 1996**

Another history issue event that sparked anti-Japanese public protest, which influenced Beijing to become more aggressive in its policies against Japan, and

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<sup>160</sup> Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 194–195.

<sup>161</sup> Erica Strecker Downs and Phillip C. Saunders, "Legitimacy and the Limits of Nationalism: China and the Diaoyu islands," *International Security* 23, no. 3 (Winter 1998–99): 117, doi:10.2307/2539340.

<sup>162</sup> Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 194–195.

heightened bilateral tensions was Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine. Following the volatile Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute, on July 29, 1996, Prime Minister Hashimoto further inflamed Sino-Japanese tensions by making an official visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, the first in over 11 years since Nakasone's controversial visit in 1985.<sup>163</sup> When asked whether the shrine visit was personal or in his official capacity as prime minister, Hashimoto replied that asking such a question was "ridiculous. . . . It's time to stop letting that sort of thing complicate our international relations,"<sup>164</sup> and asked "Why should it matter anymore?"<sup>165</sup> China took the visit more seriously. An article in the *People's Daily* tied Prime Minister Hashimoto's visit to renewed right-wing Japanese militarism and Japan's inability to properly remember its history.<sup>166</sup>

Anti-Japanese student protests against the Yasukuni visit broke out in China, obligating the CCP to play the history card against Japan.<sup>167</sup> Beijing demanded that Japan take measures to own its past wartime atrocities to assure its neighbors that it would reject militarism.<sup>168</sup> A spokesman from the Chinese foreign ministry stated that Prime Minister Hashimoto "hurt the feelings of all the people from every country, including China, which suffered under the hands of Japanese militarists."<sup>169</sup> Beijing acted in a relatively moderate way, and limited public protest over the Yasukuni Shrine compared to the response allowed over Nakasone's visit in 1985. Such protests, however minor, forced Japan to respond to the demands by both the Chinese public and the CCP authorities, which became another irritant in Sino-Japanese relations.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Mong Cheung, *Political Survival and Yasukuni in Japan's Relations with China* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 50–53.

<sup>164</sup> "Japan Premier Visits Shrine to War Dead," *New York Times*, July 30, 1996, [www.nytimes.com/1996/07/30/world/japan-premier-visits-shrine-to-war-dead.html](http://www.nytimes.com/1996/07/30/world/japan-premier-visits-shrine-to-war-dead.html).

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Cheung, *Political Survival and Yasukuni*, 51.

<sup>167</sup> "Japan Premier Visits Shrine to War Dead."

<sup>168</sup> Cheung, *Political Survival and Yasukuni*, 50–53.

<sup>169</sup> "Japan Premier Visits Shrine to War Dead."

<sup>170</sup> Cheung, *Political Survival and Yasukuni*, 50–53.



To quell public protests, Beijing's top leaders continued to denounce the visit and openly accused Hashimoto of purposefully trying to aggravate already tense Sino-Japanese relations. After receiving both domestic and international criticism, Hashimoto felt compelled to explain any misunderstandings of the incident and claimed that his visit was personal, made on his birthday, and should not be subject to public criticism. That same year, Hashimoto avoided visiting the Yasukuni Shrine on the anniversary of the end of the Pacific War. Instead, Hashimoto attended a peace ceremony and openly conveyed regret and remorse for Japan's war crimes and further explained that his visit had nothing to do with the enshrined class A war criminals or a desire for renewed militaristic aggression in Asia.<sup>171</sup>

Beijing's top leaders remained unsatisfied by Hashimoto's halfhearted apology and continued to push the history issue against Japan to further influence Japanese domestic politics. By the end of August, Chinese Vice Premier Qian Qichen and Deputy Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan expressed dissatisfaction with Hashimoto's Yasukuni visit to left-wing Japanese political factions. In September, Chinese Premier Li Peng renewed his protest of Hashimoto's actions to former Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Prime Minister Noburu Takishita in hopes of putting domestic party pressure on Hashimoto to properly address the Yasukuni visit. At a UN summit in New York, Vice Premier Qian Qichen continued to express China's indignation over Hashimoto's Yasukuni visit. In this case, the potential rise of Chinese anti-Japanese sentiments compelled Beijing to act more aggressively against Japan. Chinese elites continually pressured the Japanese to refrain from future visits to the shrine, in part to prevent public uprisings from getting out of hand like they did after the shrine visit by Prime Minister Nakasone.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Cheung, *Political Survival and Yasukuni*, 50–53.

Consequently, on October 4, 1996, Hashimoto announced that he would refrain from future Yasukuni Shrine visits during his time as prime minister to avoid both domestic and international protests. Hashimoto decided against future visits to deescalate rising Sino-Japanese tensions during this time, as both the Chinese elites and public linked the Yasukuni Shrine visits to the ongoing Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute. Before such protests from China, Prime Minister Hashimoto had planned to visit the shrine during the anniversary of the end of WWII and during the Yasukuni autumn festival that same year. Not going was a difficult decision for Hashimoto because, as the former president of the Japan Society of Bereaved Families (*Izokukai*), he was expected to visit the shrine as part of his loyalties to the association.<sup>173</sup> Evidence suggests that to quell initial protests from China, Hashimoto initially downplayed his visit in 1996 by claiming that it was a personal visit. However, in both July 1997 and April 2001, Hashimoto confessed to the press that his 1996 visit was not solely for personal reasons but was also an official visit as prime minister of Japan. In 2001, Hashimoto told the press that “I made an official visit, and as a result it became a big problem. . . . I’ve stopped going since then.”<sup>174</sup> In hopes of amending Sino-Japanese relations, in November 1996, Hashimoto reinstated financial ODA to China, which had been halted to protest China’s 1995 nuclear test. To make further amends for the Yasukuni Shrine visit, on September 6, 1997, near the time of the anniversary of Japan’s invasion of China, Prime Minister Hashimoto visited the Shenyang 918 History Museum to express remorse for Japan’s wartime events and show the Chinese public that Japan could atone for its past wartime

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<sup>173</sup> Andrew Pollack, “Japan Wonders if Premier’s Tie to Rightists is Ended,” *New York Times*, archives 1996, [www.nytimes.com/1996/01/15/world/japan-wonders-if-premier-s-tie-to-rightists-is-ended.html](http://www.nytimes.com/1996/01/15/world/japan-wonders-if-premier-s-tie-to-rightists-is-ended.html).

<sup>174</sup> “LDP Presidential Hopefuls Eye Visits to Yasukuni Shrine,” *Kyoto News International*, April 17, 2001, [www.thefreelibrary.com/LDP+presidential+hopefuls+eye+visits+to+Yasukuni+Shrine.-a073597833](http://www.thefreelibrary.com/LDP+presidential+hopefuls+eye+visits+to+Yasukuni+Shrine.-a073597833).

events.<sup>175</sup> Hence, after continual Chinese protests, to improve bilateral Sino-Japanese relations, Japan made concessions to China and became more apologetic toward its Asian neighbors regarding the history issue. Although this event increased bilateral tensions and contributed to the downturn of bilateral relations, both Beijing and Tokyo were able to work through some of the issues.<sup>176</sup>

### **C. PERIOD OF DISCORD: 2003–2006**

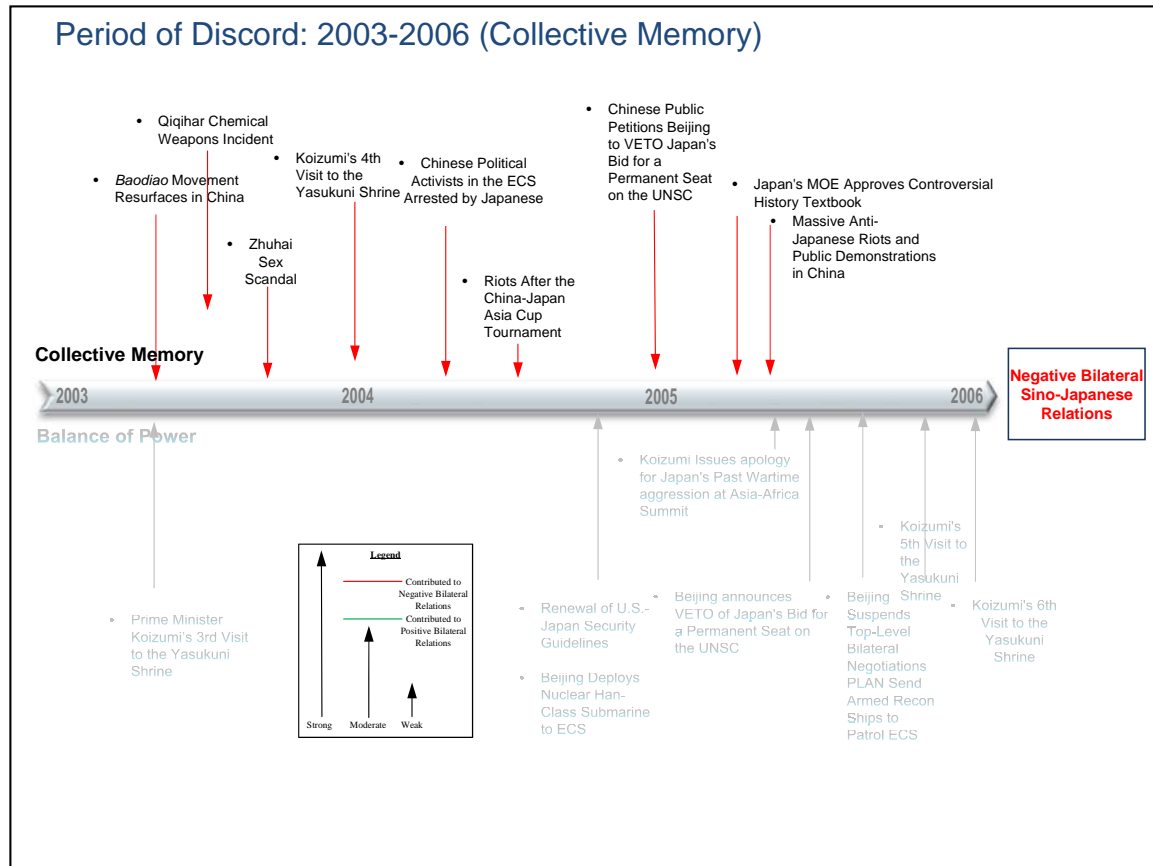
Bilateral diplomacy suffered in 2003–2006 because of rising negative public opinion in reaction to controversial Japanese actions that stirred the collective memories of China's past trauma. Scholars considered this period one of the most discordant in Sino-Japanese relations since normalization in 1972.<sup>177</sup> This next period of discord witnessed several incidents involving the history issue that ignited anti-Japanese fervor and waves of mobilization in China. As depicted in Figure 9, the main events explored in this section are the Qiqihar Chemical Weapons Explosion, the Zhuhai Sex Scandal, the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute of 2004, China's veto at the UNSC, Japan's history textbook controversy, and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's Yasukuni Shrine visits.

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<sup>175</sup> Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 77–79.

<sup>176</sup> Cheung, *Political Survival and Yasukuni*, 50–53.

<sup>177</sup> Yahuda, *Two Tigers*, 45; M. Wan, *Sino-Japanese Relations*, 30; Yinan He, "Remembering and Forgetting the War: Elite Mythmaking, Mass Reaction, and Sino-Japanese Relations, 1950–2006," *History and Memory* 19, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2007): 44, [https://ir.cas2.lehigh.edu/sites/ir.cas2.lehigh.edu/files/YinanHe\\_RememberingForgettingWar.pdf](https://ir.cas2.lehigh.edu/sites/ir.cas2.lehigh.edu/files/YinanHe_RememberingForgettingWar.pdf).



The collective memories of the Chinese public heavily influenced this period of discord—expressed in uprisings over controversial Japanese events—all of which forced Beijing to harden its policies against Japan and strained Sino-Japanese relations. History-related events are depicted as weak, moderate or strong contributions (arrow sizes) to either positive (green) or negative (red) Sino-Japanese relations. The upper half of the figure depicts events most affected by collective memory (Hypothesis 1). The lower half of the figure depicts events most affected by the balance of power (Hypothesis 2). For this thesis, arrow placement (above or below) was determined by which hypothesis better represented the event.

Figure 9. Period of Discord: 2003–2006 (Collective Memory)

### 1. Qiqihar Chemical Weapons Explosions, 2003

During this period, the effects of Japanese chemical weapons remaining in China became a main Sino-Japanese history issue that reminded the Chinese people of the atrocities suffered under Japanese colonization and triggered massive anti-Japanese protest, hurting cooperative bilateral relations. When Japan occupied China during the Second Sino-Japanese War and WWII, the Imperial Japanese Army exploited biological and chemical weapons against the Chinese. End-of-war estimates determined that more

than one-fourth of all Japanese artillery and more than one-third of all aircraft incendiaries contained chemical toxins.<sup>178</sup> It is estimated that the Japanese used biological and chemical weapons and toxic gas nearly 2,900 times against the Chinese, which resulted in over 37,000 casualties, 2,086 of which were fatal.<sup>179</sup> At the end of the war, many abandoned chemical weapons (ACWs) were buried in the ground and toxic chemical compounds infiltrated the waterways and contaminated water supplies. The exact number of ACWs left by the Japanese is still debated. The Federation of American Scientists and the Japanese government have estimated that over 700,000 ACW components were left behind.<sup>180</sup> Official Chinese statements claim that there could be over two million ACWs in China, as many are yet to be found.<sup>181</sup>

Before the Qiqihar Incident in 2003, China and Japan experienced relatively cooperative relations regarding the cleanup of ACWs, with minimal complaints and little protest from either side. In the 1990s, China and Japan signed a chemical weapons convention (CWC) legally requiring that Japan assist in the removal of all ACWs and endorsing a bilateral memorandum of understanding (MOU) regarding the ACW issue in China.<sup>182</sup> Both China and Japan also created offices that appointed respective representatives to monitor all efforts, provide bilateral coordination, and set up budget and acquisition requirements. In 2002, Chinese officials publicly commended Japanese efforts to actively remove and destroy all ACWs. An article in the *Xinhua News Agency* declared that “both sides hailed the [ACW] joint efforts as ‘very significant’ to future relations, especially as the countries celebrate 30 years of diplomatic ties.”<sup>183</sup> The

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<sup>178</sup> Ondrej Filipec, “Abandoned Chemical Weapons in Sino-Japanese Relations: From Denial to Cooperation,” *Contemporary European Studies* 2, (2011): 26, [www.academia.edu/23276849/Abandoned\\_Chemical\\_Weapons\\_in\\_Sino-Japanese\\_relations\\_From\\_denial\\_to\\_cooperation](http://www.academia.edu/23276849/Abandoned_Chemical_Weapons_in_Sino-Japanese_relations_From_denial_to_cooperation).

<sup>179</sup> Filipec, “Abandoned Chemical Weapons,” 26.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 25; Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 91.

<sup>181</sup> Filipec, “Abandoned Chemical Weapons,” 25; Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 91.

<sup>182</sup> The MOU also became a document of official recognition and responsibility for Japan to provide and fund all requirements and provide the essential expertise regarding the removal and destruction of all ACWs in China. Filipec, “Abandoned Chemical Weapons,” 27–31.

<sup>183</sup> Xinhua article as quoted by James Reilly. Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 95.

Chinese Foreign Ministry website dedicated a section to reassuring the public of the continuing government actions and even highlighted the positive and cooperative Sino-Japanese efforts to address the cleanup of chemical toxins. The official website stated that Japan “was fully aware of the seriousness and urgency of the issue . . . [and] keenly regretted for the damages which the Chinese people have so far suffered,” and went on to say that “the Japanese side is committed to solving the issue.”<sup>184</sup> During this time, Chinese officials did not advertise nor bring to the public’s attention the suffering of the victims of the abandoned ACWs in state media venues or any criticism of Japan’s removal efforts.<sup>185</sup>

However, over the years, the safe removal and destruction of the massive number of ACWs in China suffered major delays that resulted in a continued number of victims, which began to test the Chinese public’s patience. Many of the weapons had decayed, rusted or were extremely volatile and required controlled excavation methods to avoid inadvertent explosions, which delayed removal efforts.<sup>186</sup> While the slow and painful removal of all ACWs in China was under way, victims and families of victims of unexploded ordnance and chemicals repeatedly sought compensation from both the Chinese and Japanese governments. Chinese victims filed lawsuits against the Japanese government in 1996–1997: 13 demanded compensation of more than 200 million yen for injuries suffered, five victims demanded more than 80 million yen for reparations.<sup>187</sup> However, such efforts received little support from the Chinese government. At that time, the Chinese government did not press Japan for reparations for its victims, nor did it allow its victims to attend court hearings in Japan.<sup>188</sup>

Before 2003, neither government compensated the victims or their families for accidental deaths that occurred since the end of the war. Local officials within the cities

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<sup>184</sup> Website as quoted by James Reilly. Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 96.

<sup>185</sup> Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 91–96; Filipec, “Abandoned Chemical Weapons,” 25–31.

<sup>186</sup> Filipec, “Abandoned Chemical Weapons,” 29–32.

<sup>187</sup> Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 94–95.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 91–96.

with ACW excavations were also reluctant to allow the ACW issue to turn into a public protest. Before 2003, the Chinese government seemed apathetic to the demands of the victims and did little to pressure Japan into providing compensation for the continuing civilian victims of remnants from Japan's War of Aggression.<sup>189</sup>

However, a 2003 chemical weapons incident in Qiqihar City gained massive public attention that changed the cooperative nature of the bilateral ACW cleanup efforts and forced Japan to respond to Chinese public demands. Construction workers in the North China city of Qiqihar City discovered five canisters of mustard gas, one of which was damaged and leaking toxins. Not knowing the contents, the workers broke them up and delivered them to a local recycling plant for disposal. Within hours, exposed workers began to suffer from burns and blisters, resulting in one death and serious injuries to 37 personnel.<sup>190</sup> When the Alliance of Patriots NGO received word of the Qiqihar incident, it immediately began an online petition to demand compensation and reparations from Japan.<sup>191</sup> Within one month, the NGO consolidated more than 1.2 million signatures across 12,518 Chinese websites, demanding Japanese apologies for its past wartime conduct and accusing the Japanese of deliberately leaving behind weapons to kill Chinese citizens to continue its wartime aggression in the present day.<sup>192</sup> Chinese political activists began to publicly demand Japan put together reparation funds to compensate all victims of Japan's War of Aggression in China. The incident incited public emotions across China in the form of Internet petitions, websites, and news articles that called for action from the Chinese authoritarian government and Japanese leadership.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 94–96.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 140–141.

<sup>191</sup> A popular public NGO called the Alliance of Patriots created a website that was known for inciting online petitions rooted in anti-Japanese rhetoric. It has been known for inflaming online public protest against Japanese nationalism, and it has linked the current actions of Japan to its past historical aggression in Asia. Ibid., 136, 141.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 143; James Reilly, “‘Harmonious World and Public Opinion in China’s Japan Policy,’” in *Harmonious World and China’s New Foreign Policy*, ed. Sujian Guo and Jean-Marc F. Blanchard (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008), 198; Wenran Jiang, “Confronting a Poisonous Past,” *South China Morning Post*, September 18, 2003, <http://cdn4.i-scmp.com/article/428241/confronting-poisonous-past>.

<sup>193</sup> Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 140–145.

In response to Chinese public protests, Japan offered its condolences to the victims, sent a delegation to investigate the incident in Qiqihar, and made an initial offering of 100 million yen as “sympathy funds” for damages.<sup>194</sup> However, the public remained unsatisfied and rejected the initial statement of condolence as disingenuous. Both the *Global Times* and the *Beijing Youth News* featured editorials that criticized Japan’s lack of the word *compensation* in its initial monetary offer and demanded a better public apology.<sup>195</sup> Articles in the *South China Morning Post* criticized Japan for refusing to officially apologize to the “poison gas victims” and also criticized China’s central authority for its apathy toward ACW victims.<sup>196</sup>

In response to public protests, Chinese leaders acted more aggressively toward Japan and demanded the Japanese government provide proper compensation to the ACW victims. Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi made an official protest to the Japanese ambassador that “the chemical weapons abandoned by Japanese troops in China are irrefutable evidence of Japanese militaristic aggression against China” and demanded “the Japanese government to take immediate action, shoulder its responsibility and deal with problems arising from the issue.”<sup>197</sup> President Hu Jintao and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi began negotiations in October, and shortly thereafter, Japan agreed to pay 300 million yen directly to the Chinese government, as compensation to the victims of the Qiqihar incident.<sup>198</sup> This marked the first time the Chinese central authority publicly advocated public demands on behalf of Chinese victims of what was seen to be remnants of Japan’s brutal aggression of China. Around the same time, the courts in Tokyo awarded 190 million yen to the 13 Chinese victims of ACWs who lodged a

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid., 142.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 142–143.

<sup>196</sup> “Anger at Offer to Poison-Gas Victims,” *South China Morning Post*, September 3, 2003, [www.scmp.com/article/426760/anger-offer-poison-gas-victims](http://www.scmp.com/article/426760/anger-offer-poison-gas-victims); Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 136, 143.

<sup>197</sup> “Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi Lodges Solemn Representations to the Japanese Side on the Chemical Weapons Issue,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, August 12, 2003, [www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjb\\_663304/zzjg\\_663340/yzs\\_663350/gjlb\\_663354/2721\\_663446/2726\\_663456/t24754.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/zzjg_663340/yzs_663350/gjlb_663354/2721_663446/2726_663456/t24754.shtml).

<sup>198</sup> Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 143–144.



lawsuit in 1996 against the Government of Japan.<sup>199</sup> Thus, evidence supports the theory that deeply embedded anti-Japanese resentment of the Chinese people has pressured Beijing to be more aggressive in its foreign policy with Japan and strained bilateral relations.

Once the public actively demanded both apologies and compensation from the Japanese government, Japan quickly offered compensation to quiet Chinese public anger. Public protests propelled the Chinese government to advocate on behalf of victims by demanding the Japanese government resolve the issue by providing a more satisfactory compensation—a position that seemed to have garnered little interest before. Negotiations then occurred to resolve the issue to public satisfaction. Thus, evidence strongly supports the power of the Chinese public's anti-Japanese sentiments regarding events related to the history issue and the public's ability to influence immediate action from both Beijing and Tokyo and shape the nature of the bilateral relationship.

## **2. Zhuhai Sex Scandal, 2003**

Another history issue event occurred in 2003 that ignited anti-Japanese sentiments in China. From September 16 to 18, 2003, overlapping the anniversary date of Japan's invasion of Manchuria, a supposed three-day sex scandal took place in a luxury hotel in a red district of Zhuhai, involving nearly four hundred Japanese businessmen and five hundred Chinese prostitutes. Initially the scandal went unnoticed; however, a Chinese witness went to the press to complain about what he had seen during his stay at the hotel, which set off a flurry of Chinese media reports that resulted in Chinese public outrage.<sup>200</sup> Anti-Japanese sentiments tied to the history issue infiltrated Chinese articles that spread

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<sup>199</sup> Nao Shimoyachi, "Court Finds Japan Responsible for Abandoned Arms," *Japan Times*, September 30, 2003, [www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2003/09/30/national/court-finds-japan-responsible-for-abandoned-arms/#.V-oJwJMrKCQ](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2003/09/30/national/court-finds-japan-responsible-for-abandoned-arms/#.V-oJwJMrKCQ); "Japan Agrees Damages for China," BBC News, September 29, 2003, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/3148454.stm>.

<sup>200</sup> Zhou Guangchun, a Chinese pharmaceutical executive who was staying at the hotel during the same time felt compelled to report the incident. At first, Zhou tried to report the affair to the local authorities; however, he met little success. Michael Taylor, "I Stepped Out of the Lift and into an Orgy," *Telegraph*, October 5, 2003. [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/1443322/I-stepped-out-of-the-lift-and-into-an-orgy.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/1443322/I-stepped-out-of-the-lift-and-into-an-orgy.html); Zixue Tai, *The Internet in China: Cyberspace and Civil Society* (New York: Taylor and Francis Group, 2006), xvi-xvii.

across the Internet and through the news media. *The China Daily* commented on how the sex scandal took place on the anniversary of Japan's invasion of Manchuria.<sup>201</sup> The article also stated that the incident incited public protest on popular websites such as *sohu.com*, as thousands of comments linked the scandal to the Imperial Japanese use and rape of "comfort women" during its occupation of China.<sup>202</sup> Outraged netizens commented that the Japanese deliberately tried to degrade China on what is officially considered their national humiliation day.<sup>203</sup> An extreme comment suggested that "the Japanese and hookers should be killed" and the hotel "blown up."<sup>204</sup> Public complaints also began to criticize the Chinese government for its inaction regarding the incident. Thus, the Chinese public linked this event to inherent anti-Japanese sentiments regarding the history issue and demanded both Beijing and Tokyo respond.<sup>205</sup>

In response to the public outrage, a spokesman from the Chinese foreign ministry publicly condemned the incident, ordered the immediate closure of the Zhuhai International Conference Center Hotel, and proclaimed that an investigation would take place and guilty patrons would be prosecuted.<sup>206</sup> The spokesman also demanded that the Government of Japan better educate its citizens regarding Chinese laws.<sup>207</sup> Thus, this publicly charged incident forced the Chinese central authorities to respond to public demands to quell protests. In addition, leaders in Beijing took this opportunity to highlight the history issue and demand that the Japanese take the incident seriously.

Compared to the Chinese, the Japanese government responded minimally to the sex scandal and announced it would only make a formal inquiry since the accused firm was a private company. The Japanese firm denied the involvement of its businessmen and

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201 "Japanese Orgy in Zhuhai Hotel Sparks Chinese Fury."

202 Ibid.

203 Khan, "China Angered by Reported Orgy."

204 "Japanese Orgy in Zhuhai Hotel Sparks Chinese Fury."

205 Ibid.; Khan, "China Angered by Reported Orgy."

206 "Suspects Detained in Zhuhai Massive Sex Scandal," *People's Daily*, September 29, 2003, [http://en.people.cn/200309/29/eng20030929\\_125151.shtml](http://en.people.cn/200309/29/eng20030929_125151.shtml).

207 Ibid.

stated and declared that the company's people "were not involved in systematic prostitute-buying."<sup>208</sup> The Chinese foreign ministry was not satisfied with Japan's halfhearted response and demanded greater Japanese initiative to actively pursue this matter. In response, the Government of Japan announced that its foreign ministry would further investigate by interviewing the employees of the suspected firm. A spokesperson from the private firm stated to the media that regardless of the results of the investigation, it had no intention of "apologiz[ing] to the Chinese for what happened [but would] cooperate if contacted."<sup>209</sup> The Chinese government gave Interpol a photo of three Japanese businessmen who were allegedly involved in the scandal with a request that the Japanese capture, detain, and prosecute the suspects. In response, Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda stated that "Japanese investigative authorities will deal with [the case] in line with domestic law."<sup>210</sup> For over a year, Chinese authorities actively pursued the investigation, which ended with the prosecution of 12 Chinese organizers of the hotel's event. For Japan, this incident went no further than an interview and official inquiry of the suspected firm. In this case, Chinese public opinion forced Beijing to act more aggressively against its policies toward Japan. In contrast, Japanese authorities responded minimally to the protests—perhaps just enough to dissuade the public from further uprisings.

This case shows strong evidence of the Chinese public's attempts to influence China's Japan policy and Japanese domestic politics. Public protests that resulted from this scandal were tied to the history issue and demanded that both Beijing and Tokyo open investigations and discipline those involved. Chinese officials responded by shutting down the hotel, conducting an investigation, and eventually punishing the

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<sup>208</sup> "Japanese Firm Issues Denial Over Chinese Hotel Orgy," *The Japan Times*, September 30, 2003, [www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2003/09/30/national/japanese-firm-issues-denial-over-chinese-hotel-orgy/#.V-r2fZMrLow](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2003/09/30/national/japanese-firm-issues-denial-over-chinese-hotel-orgy/#.V-r2fZMrLow).

<sup>209</sup> "Government Set to Investigate Tourist Orgy," *The Japan Times*, October 8, 2003, [www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2003/10/08/national/government-set-to-investigate-tourist-orgy/#.WKTZbhIrL-Y](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2003/10/08/national/government-set-to-investigate-tourist-orgy/#.WKTZbhIrL-Y).

<sup>210</sup> "Japan Balks at Cooperating with China in Orgy Probe," *The Japan Times*, December 19, 2003, [www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2003/12/19/national/japan-balks-at-cooperating-with-china-in-orgy-probe/#.V-r7x5MrLow](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2003/12/19/national/japan-balks-at-cooperating-with-china-in-orgy-probe/#.V-r7x5MrLow).

Chinese citizens involved in the scandal. Beijing also made demands for Tokyo to cooperate with the investigation, educate its citizens on Chinese laws, and arrest those suspected of misconduct. Tokyo was more reluctant to impose punishment on a private firm, citing the limitations of Japanese domestic laws. However, Japan reassured China that it would provide inquiries and conduct an investigation led by the Japanese foreign ministry. The Japanese firm initially denied involvement, cited Chinese media bias against Japan, and refused to apologize regarding the event. The following year, Chinese officials made public updates regarding investigation results and periodically made demands on Japan to take action when new information was found, keeping the issue alive until final prosecution on the Chinese side. The Japanese response seemed less satisfactory to both the Chinese public and central authority as Tokyo was not willing to take the matter seriously. Regardless, controversial Japanese actions sparked the collective memories of China's past trauma and heightened anti-Japanese public opinion that spurred the Chinese government to act more aggressively in its policies against Japan; this action, however, failed to provoke a stronger Japanese response to satisfy Chinese public demands but did become an irritant on bilateral relations.

### **3. The Resurgence of the *Baodiao* Movement and the 2004 Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands Dispute**

The Chinese public links Japan's history of brutal aggression in Asia with the Diaoyu/Senkaku sovereignty debate. *Baodiao* or "Defend the Diaoyu Islands" activists claim Japan wrongfully claimed sovereignty over the islands after the Sino-Japanese War in the unequal Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895. Furthermore, they argue that the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands were returned China as part of the WWII settlement. Chinese historical activists, like those who are part of the *Baodiao* movement, continually associate Japan's territorial claims with a suspected resurgence of Japanese right-wing nationalism. Such nationalism could lead to a revived form of militarism once seen in the

early 20th century. Thus, these activists continually block Japan from claiming any rights over Chinese territory as a way to contain Japanese nationalism.<sup>211</sup>

In 2004, seven political activists from the *Baodiao* movement sparked anti-Japanese public protests in China when they organized a voyage to the disputed islands to challenge Japanese claims. One *Baodiao* activist told James Reilly that “We kept the trip secret, so the Chinese government couldn’t stop us.”<sup>212</sup> The Japanese coast guard intercepted the group, refused to let them return to the mainland, incarcerated them in a holding cell, and later arrested them for illegally trespassing on Japanese territory. The activists staged a hunger strike demanding to return to China. Shortly thereafter, dozens of protestors burned the Japanese flag in front of the Japanese Embassy in Beijing and chanted “the Chinese people will not be insulted.”<sup>213</sup> Protests lasted a few hours until the local police forced all demonstrators to disperse. However short the demonstration was, the *Baodiao* movement, coupled with anti-Japanese public protests, revived the Sino-Japanese territorial dispute, an action which demanded responses from the highest levels of government.<sup>214</sup>

In response to public protests, Beijing acted more aggressively toward Japan and demanded the release of the activists without condition. A Chinese vice foreign minister warned that failure to immediately release the activists would hurt bilateral relations and

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<sup>211</sup> Action Committee for Defending the Diaoyu Islands, accessed September 21, 2016, [www.diaoyuislands.org/](http://www.diaoyuislands.org/); See also china918 website as translated into English. China918, accessed September 21, 2016, [https://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate\\_c?depth=1&hl=en&prev=search&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=zh-CN&u=www.china918.cn/&usg=ALkJrhjiCZYh4ecsHGVD1p1QGVTgmiGcog](https://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate_c?depth=1&hl=en&prev=search&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=zh-CN&u=www.china918.cn/&usg=ALkJrhjiCZYh4ecsHGVD1p1QGVTgmiGcog); In 2015, the Chinese state launched an official website outlining China’s claims to the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands with historical evidence dating back to 1403. Diaoyu Dao: The Inherent Territory of China, accessed September 21, 2016, [www.diaoyudao.org.cn/en/](http://www.diaoyudao.org.cn/en/); Taiwan’s Central News Agency launched a similar website and posts daily articles regarding the latest news on the dispute as well as providing links to “prove” Chinese sovereignty over the islands; The Diaoyutai Islands: Sovereign Territory of the Republic of China (Taiwan), accessed September 21, 2016, <http://taiwandiaoyutaiislands.tw/EN/News.aspx>.

<sup>212</sup> Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 145.

<sup>213</sup> Joseph Kahn, “China Tells Japan to Release 7 Arrested on Disputed Island,” *New York Times*, March 26, 2004, [www.nytimes.com/2004/03/26/world/china-tells-japan-to-release-7-arrested-on-disputed-island.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2004/03/26/world/china-tells-japan-to-release-7-arrested-on-disputed-island.html).

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.; Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 145–146.

“certainly will arouse the powerful indignation of the Chinese people.”<sup>215</sup> Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo launched a formal protest against the Government of Japan for “seriously infring[ing] on China’s territorial sovereignty,” stating that “the Chinese government and the people will never accept it.”<sup>216</sup> That same evening, Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi urged an immediate resolution to the issue from his foreign ministry bureaucrats. The following day, Japan released the seven activists without condition. In this case, public protests forced Beijing to make aggressive demands on Japan and, in turn, required Japan to concede to Chinese demands.<sup>217</sup>

Although public opinion and political activists led China to demand Japan immediately release the activists, the Chinese government did not endorse its actions or continue hardened policies in the sovereignty debate. When the activists returned to China, they did not receive the expected warm welcome as their country’s heroes. Rather, they were immediately detained by Chinese security officers. In addition, a *Baodiao* organizer was forbidden to talk to the press and was warned by the authorities to refrain from instigating further expeditions to protest the islands dispute. Chinese officials reprimanded the activists and said “Don’t be too happy with yourself (*bie tai deyi*) . . . You guys have caused us a lot of trouble (*mafan*) with this.”<sup>218</sup> Furthermore, both China and Japan cooperated to prevent excursions to the islands from either side to mitigate future domestic protests. The Chinese foreign ministry expressed appreciation for the quick and cooperative release of the activists, but it also stated that “we have an indisputable claim to these islands . . . [but] through peaceful negotiation we can come to narrow some differences.”<sup>219</sup> Sino-Japanese bilateral cooperation and talks resumed normal status within a few weeks. However, the Japanese controversial action of

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<sup>215</sup> Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Yesui as quoted by James Reilly. Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 145–146.

<sup>216</sup> “China Protests Japan’s Detention of Citizens in Diaoyu Islands Landings,” *Xinhua News Agency*, March 26, 2004, [www.china.org.cn/english/2004/Mar/91315.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/english/2004/Mar/91315.htm).

<sup>217</sup> Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 145–146.

<sup>218</sup> This came from a James Reilly personal interview. Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 146.

<sup>219</sup> Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing and then Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Kong Quan as quoted by James Reilly. Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 146.

arresting and detaining historical activists spurred the Chinese public to express their anti-Japanese sentiments regarding history, manifested in public protests, to fight for Chinese sovereignty in the ECS and influence bilateral relations for the worse.<sup>220</sup>

This case shows how public protests regarding the islands dispute forced Beijing and Tokyo to calm Chinese public protests. Here, the Chinese public supported a popular anti-Japanese NGO for taking action to challenge Japan's claim over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands without the permission or endorsement of the CCP. Beijing made official protests to the Government of Japan and demanded the immediate release of the activists without condition. Although the Chinese government controlled and limited protests, Chinese officials warned that any delay or failure to release the activists could lead to an escalation of public protests that could further damage bilateral relations. Japan quickly acquiesced to China's demands and released the activists the following day. Thus, this incident strongly suggests that anti-Japanese collective memory among the Chinese public can be further provoked by either Chinese or Japanese actions. In turn, public protests trigger the Chinese central authority to become aggressive in its insistence that Japan accede to Chinese public demands. Furthermore, to quiet anti-Japanese protests and respond to official Chinese requests, Japanese officials have once again made concessions to the Chinese public. This incident strongly supports the hypothesis of collective memory and its ability to harm Sino-Japanese relations.

#### **4. Protests against Japan's Bid for a Permanent Seat on the United Nations Security Council and the Japanese History Textbook Dispute, 2005**

During the spring of 2005, two issues involving Sino-Japanese historical disputes ignited a series of massive anti-Japanese demonstrations in China that threatened to harm bilateral relations. The first issue was the public's protest against Japan's bid for a permanent seat on the UNSC. The second issue was the approval of a controversial right-wing Japanese textbook. Both issues activated inherent anti-Japanese sentiment and sparked massive protests throughout China that repeated the cycle of Beijing's

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<sup>220</sup> Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 145–147.

aggressiveness followed by Japan's concessions, further stressing bilateral relations and strongly contributing to this period of discord.

In March 2005, the Chinese public began a massive online petition to pressure China to veto Japan's bid for permanent membership on the UNSC. The Chinese people believed that Japan's permanent membership could renew Japan's militarism and unleash inherent Japanese aggression in Asia. Within the first few weeks, the online petition received over 2.5 million signatures from across the globe.<sup>221</sup> By March 31, 2005, the petition had received over 22 million signatures protesting Japan's permanent membership in the UN.<sup>222</sup> Political activist Tong Zeng told reporters that "China must vote no and not just abstain. . . . The government may not want to take the lead, but the Chinese people have taken the lead."<sup>223</sup> Another anti-Japanese historical activist stated that "No one—not the United Nations nor the Chinese government—can ignore so many people expressing their views."<sup>224</sup> Although Japanese officials questioned the legitimacy of the signatures,<sup>225</sup> the petition signaled the international community that the Chinese public's anti-Japanese sentiments stemmed from the history issue.

Public protests made it difficult for China to support Japan's bid for a permanent seat on the UNSC. At the time of this petition, official Chinese statements remained vague on China's decision regarding Japan's bid.<sup>226</sup> Authors have debated whether China was already planning to veto Japan's seat regardless of public opinion.<sup>227</sup> However, a spokesman from China's foreign ministry stated that public protests of Japan's bid symbolized Japan's selective amnesia of its history and hinted that expansion of the

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<sup>221</sup> Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 151

<sup>222</sup> Joseph Kahn, "If 22 Million Chinese Prevail at U.N., Japan Won't," *New York Times*, April 1, 2005, [www.nytimes.com/2005/04/01/world/asia/if-22-million-chinese-prevail-at-un-japan-wont.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/01/world/asia/if-22-million-chinese-prevail-at-un-japan-wont.html).

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 153–154.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.



UNSC membership should be reserved only for developing nations.<sup>228</sup> The Chinese spokesman further stated that “Japan has to take a responsible attitude toward history to build trust among the people of Asia, including China.”<sup>229</sup> China did not officially divulge its intentions regarding its vote or veto at the UNSC until after the protests that would ensue due to the textbook dispute. After massive anti-Japanese demonstrations throughout China, the CCP had no other choice but to veto Japan’s bid.<sup>230</sup>

During this time, public protests against Japan’s desire for greater power in the UN reached an apex when united with the Chinese public’s outrage against Japan’s approval of Japan’s latest junior high history textbook. On April 4, 2005, Japan’s Ministry of Education (MOE) endorsed the approval of eight new history textbooks. The MOE stated that over 124 corrections had been made to the newest edition of this textbook to properly depict Japan’s historical wartime events.<sup>231</sup> However, the newly revised textbook contained controversial descriptions of Japan’s wartime history. For example, the terms *comfort women* or *military comfort women* had been removed from all eight of the approved textbooks.<sup>232</sup> The description of the Nanjing Massacre avoided any

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<sup>228</sup> Kahn, “If 22 Million Chinese Prevail.”

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 153–154.

<sup>231</sup> “Japan Approves Textbook Glossing Wartime Atrocities,” *China Daily*, April 5, 2005, [www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-04/05/content\\_431488.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-04/05/content_431488.htm).

<sup>232</sup> Anthony Faiola, “Japanese Schoolbooks Anger S. Korea, China: Militaristic Past is Seen as Whitewashed,” *Washington Post*, April 6, 2005, [www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A27855-2005Apr5.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A27855-2005Apr5.html); *Comfort women* is the Japanese term used to describe the women who were forced to be sex slaves for the Japanese Imperial Army during World War II. Cultural aspects of the Japanese society also influence the writing and language used by the media. Based on Shinto superstitions of bad luck and karma, the use of positive or more benign language to soften strongly negative words is a norm in Japanese dialect. The use of negative language is considered impolite as it could bring upon bad luck or cause the same negativity in one’s life. Thus, positive and less caustic words are used to describe a negative aspect. In the controversial cases regarding the Korean sex slaves used by the Japanese during WWII, the Japanese call these victims “comfort women” or *juugan-ianfu*. The word for “prostitution,” *enjokousai* is translated into “helping relationship.” Thus, the media softens any language that puts nationalism in a negative light, thereby strengthening the conservative agenda’s push to reinterpret Japan’s negative history using softer language to describe its past wartime conduct. Matthew A. Killmeier and Naomi Chiba, “Neo-Nationalism Seeks Strength from Gods: Yasukuni Shrine, Collective Memory and the Japanese Press,” *University of Southern Maine* (2010): 339–341, 348, doi:10.1177.1750635210378946.

specific description of the atrocities committed by the Japanese Imperial Army.<sup>233</sup> The book labeled the Nanjing Massacre an “incident” with an accompanying footnote that stated “military and civilian population suffered many casualties due to the Japanese military” without mentioning the number of victims.<sup>234</sup> The section on the Marco Polo Bridge incident of 1937 discussed how the Japanese installed a “friendly government” in Manchukuo and how Japan blamed the start of the First Sino-Japanese War on the Chinese for shooting at Japanese soldiers.<sup>235</sup> Furthermore, the textbook defended Japan’s East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere as a policy that enabled other Asian countries to gain sovereignty over Western powers.<sup>236</sup> China’s *Xinhua* news site published an editorial stating that the textbook was “more distorted than the previous one.”<sup>237</sup> The editorial claimed the textbook was “packed with lies, contradictions, and even myths” and warned the public that “imparted with arrogance, prejudice and enthusiasm for war . . . Japan’s younger generations are in danger of sliding back to militarism again if given the right climate.”<sup>238</sup> The article also called for Japan to “deeply reflect its past, plead guilty and sincerely ask for forgiveness of the victims.”<sup>239</sup> From the Chinese point of view, this textbook falsified Japan’s wartime history and could foster a renewed sense of militaristic nationalism among the youth.

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi initially defended his MOE’s decision to endorse the textbook, which set off a number of official protests against Japan and

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<sup>233</sup> Weilu Tan, “The Forgotten History: Textbook Controversy and Sino-Japanese Relations, (Bachelor of Philosophy thesis, University of Pittsburg, 2009), 27, [http://d-scholarship.pitt.edu/7824/1/Tan\\_Weilu\\_BPhil.pdf](http://d-scholarship.pitt.edu/7824/1/Tan_Weilu_BPhil.pdf).

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> See the translation at the following website: “Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform: New History Textbook 2005 Version,” World Heritage Encyclopedia Edition, Project Gutenberg Self-Publishing Press, accessed February 15, 2017, [http://gutenberg.us/articles/japanese\\_society\\_for\\_history\\_textbook\\_reform](http://gutenberg.us/articles/japanese_society_for_history_textbook_reform).

<sup>237</sup> “Xinhua Commentary: Distorted History Textbook Unacceptable,” *Xinhua*, March 31, 2005, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2005-03/31/content\\_2771488.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2005-03/31/content_2771488.htm).

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

warnings about the possible consequences of massive Chinese public uprisings.<sup>240</sup> Koizumi stated that this issue was a domestic matter that should be respected by other nations.<sup>241</sup> Responding to public protests, the Chinese central authority filed an official protest over the approval of the textbooks by Japan's MOE. Vice Foreign Minister Qiao Zonghuai protested Japan's approval of the textbook and stated that it would "be vehemently condemned by people from all Asian countries that have been victimized by Japan, including the Chinese."<sup>242</sup> An official statement from the Chinese foreign ministry demanded that the Japanese correctly "view its history of militarism and aggression"<sup>243</sup> and that Japan had an "irresponsible attitude" regarding its own history."<sup>244</sup> Additional statements from Beijing also demanded that the Japanese "treat Chinese people's concerns over the issue correctly [and] handle historic issues closely related to Chinese people's feelings properly."<sup>245</sup> An editorial in the *People's Daily* made a more caustic claim that the Japanese had a "twisted psychology" and "beautifie[d] aggression."<sup>246</sup> It further stated that the "concealment and adulteration of the historical facts about Japanese militarist expansionism [has] . . . gone beyond the scope of Japan's internal affairs."<sup>247</sup> Although public protests compelled the Chinese elites to become more demanding of Japan, Japan refused to respond accordingly.

Offended by Prime Minister Koizumi's defense of the textbook, his controversial visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, and Japan's bid for a permanent seat on the UNSC, the Chinese public reached a breaking point of extreme anti-Japanese outrage. Using blogs, websites, text messages, and e-mails, Chinese nationalists and history activists

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<sup>240</sup> "Koizumi Urges Calm in History Text Row," *Japan Times*, April 6, 2005, [www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2005/04/06/national/koizumi-urges-calm-in-history-text-row/#.WKT3ghIrKt8](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2005/04/06/national/koizumi-urges-calm-in-history-text-row/#.WKT3ghIrKt8).

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

<sup>242</sup> Hu Xiao, "Japanese Textbook Distorts History, Stirs Fury," *China Daily*, April 6, 2005, [www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-04/06/content\\_431575.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-04/06/content_431575.htm).

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> Faiola, "Japanese Schoolbooks."

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> "Japan's Right-Wing Textbook Is Teaching Material by Negative Example: Comment," *People's Daily Online*, April 6, 2005, [http://en.people.cn/200504/06/eng20050406\\_179790.html](http://en.people.cn/200504/06/eng20050406_179790.html).

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

encouraged public demonstrations against Japan's amnesia of its wartime atrocities.<sup>248</sup> In anticipation of Chinese public protests, the Chinese foreign ministry called for the public to show its resentment "in a reasonable way."<sup>249</sup> However, on the weekend of April 9, 2005, over 20,000 anti-Japanese protestors took to the streets of Beijing shouting slogans such as "Down with Japan!" and "Boycott Japanese goods!" and "Long live China!"<sup>250</sup> Japanese restaurants, bars, businesses, factories, and banks became targets of vandalism and violence as hundreds of policemen stood by and did little to stop the violence. Rioters burned Japanese flags and held signs that said "Protest New Japanese Textbooks."<sup>251</sup> More than 500 Chinese paramilitary police fought to control a crowd of over 3,000 angry protestors attacking the Japanese Embassy with stones and bottles.<sup>252</sup> In front of the Japanese ambassador's home, protestors shouted "Japanese pig come out!" and "Chinese people shouldn't protect Japanese!"<sup>253</sup> Thousands came out for marches in Shenzhen. The Japanese consulate became the target in Guangzhou as windows were broken and Japanese flags were burned. Hong Kong also had protestors with signs that said "Down with Japanese Militarism!"<sup>254</sup> A Chinese protestor called for Chinese authorities to be more forceful toward Japan, stating, "I think China should be more firm [in its policies with Japan]. . . . This is a good way to pass our voice to the government and to the Japanese people."<sup>255</sup> An article in *Xinhua* commented on how thousands came out to protest Japan's "tampering of history."<sup>256</sup>

In response to the violent anti-Japanese public demonstrations in China, Japan initially hardened its stance and refused to make concessions. The Japanese foreign

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<sup>248</sup> "Thousands in Beijing March Against Japan"; Yardley, "Hundred Cellphones Bloom."

<sup>249</sup> Xiao, "Japanese Textbook Distorts History, Stirs Fury."

<sup>250</sup> "Thousands in Beijing March Against Japan."

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> "China's Anti-Japan Rallies Spread," BBC News, April 10, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4429809.stm>.

<sup>255</sup> "Thousands in Beijing March Against Japan."

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

minister “formally demanded China’s apology and compensation” for the destruction of Japanese businesses, embassy, and consulate.<sup>257</sup> The Japanese government official also criticized Beijing for its failure to control the situation and called on China “to take all necessary measures” to ensure the safety of all Japanese citizens.<sup>258</sup> In addition, right-wing Japanese politicians publicly dismissed the protests. They claimed that allowing such protests diverted the public’s attention from China’s own domestic shortfalls and to “keep Japan from claiming its rightful place in the world.”<sup>259</sup> Thus, Japan redoubled its initial support of the controversial textbook.

In response to Japan’s recalcitrance, Chinese authorities hardened its stance toward Japan’s official protests. Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing refused to apologize or provide compensation for the damage inflicted on Japanese residents in China. He further stated that “the Chinese Government has never done anything that wronged the Japanese people” and that the violent protests were blamed on Japanese actions that “have hurt the feelings of the Chinese people.”<sup>260</sup> A BBC News editorial stated that these public demonstrations created a “War of Words”<sup>261</sup> between Japan and China. On the one hand, Japan demanded that China apologize and provide compensation for the damage caused by the rioters. On the other hand, China demanded that Japan “‘face up to history’ and admit the suffering caused by its forces before and during the war.”<sup>262</sup> Sino-Japanese relations seemed to be at a stalemate, with neither side willing to make concessions to the other’s demands.

After three weeks of anti-Japanese public demonstrations and vandalism, Chinese elites began to take stronger measures to suppress public protests and crack down on anti-

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<sup>257</sup> “Tokyo Protests Anti-Japan Rallies in China,” *New York Times*, April 11, 2005, [www.nytimes.com/2005/04/11/world/asia/tokyo-protests-antijapan-rallies-in-china.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/11/world/asia/tokyo-protests-antijapan-rallies-in-china.html).

<sup>258</sup> “Thousands Join Anti-Japan Protests,” BBC News, April 16, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4450975.stm>.

<sup>259</sup> “Tokyo Protests Anti-Japan Rallies in China.”

<sup>260</sup> “China Won’t Apologize to Japan Over Protests,” NBC News, April 18, 2005, [www.nbcnews.com/id/7514819/ns/world\\_news/t/china-wont-apologize-japan-over-protests/#.VsDpJMrLow](http://www.nbcnews.com/id/7514819/ns/world_news/t/china-wont-apologize-japan-over-protests/#.VsDpJMrLow).

<sup>261</sup> “Thousands Join Anti-Japan Protests.”

<sup>262</sup> Ibid.

Japanese violence. On April 19, 2005, Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing issued a statement warning the public to not engage in “unapproved demonstrations or activities that may affect social stability.”<sup>263</sup> He told Chinese citizens to “express their feelings in a lawful and orderly way.”<sup>264</sup> An article from the *People’s Daily* discussed how “frictions and problems of various kinds . . . can only be settled in an orderly manner by abiding by the law.”<sup>265</sup> Li also broadcast a lecture to the nation that encouraged Chinese citizens to focus on the positive aspects of Sino-Japanese relations and to refrain from protests that would harm peaceful bilateral relations.<sup>266</sup> In addition, 42 detained protestors were forced to confess and apologize for their acts of vandalism as they were condemned on national television.<sup>267</sup> Thus, evidence suggests that the CCP authorized public protests and mass demonstrations only to a certain point and then began more aggressive measures to quell protests via the use of threats and force.

Meanwhile, anti-Japanese public protests in China spurred domestic protests in Japan. An article in the *People’s Daily* featured demonstrators in Japan allegedly sympathetic to South Korea and China’s protests marching in Tokyo’s streets calling for Japanese leaders to apologize to China for Japan’s wartime conduct and the approval of the controversial textbook.<sup>268</sup> Thus, Japan received international and domestic pressure to properly address the history issue and make amends with China.

Public protests caused a stalemate in Sino-Japanese relations. Such protests created an atmosphere of extreme anti-Japanese hatred that forced Beijing’s hand toward Japan. They also encouraged Tokyo to respond in kind toward China. Neither side wanted to grant concessions to achieve positive bilateral relations. An article in the *Economist* highlighted Deputy Foreign Minister Wu Dawei’s assessment that “his

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<sup>263</sup> “Managing Unrest: Protests Against Japan Cause Official Unease in China,” *Economist*, April 21, 2005, [www.economist.com/node/3895945](http://www.economist.com/node/3895945).

<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

<sup>265</sup> “China Won’t Apologize to Japan Over Protests.”

<sup>266</sup> Richard Spencer, “China Parades ‘The Guilty’ to Placate Japan.”

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> “Demonstration in Tokyo Call on Japanese to Put Pressure on Government,” *People’s Daily*, April 23, 2005, [http://en.people.cn/200504/23/eng20050423\\_182470.html](http://en.people.cn/200504/23/eng20050423_182470.html).

country's ties with Japan were at their worst since the rivals established diplomatic relations in 1972.”<sup>269</sup>

To make amends with China, on April 22, 2005, at an Asia-Africa summit in Jakarta, Prime Minister Koizumi began his remarks with an apology to Asian neighbors. Koizumi stated that

Japan squarely faces these facts of history in a spirit of humility. With feelings of deep remorse and heartfelt apology always engraved in mind, Japan has resolutely maintained . . . its principle of resolving all matters by peaceful means, without recourse to use of force.<sup>270</sup>

Such contrition had been intended to pacify domestic protests in South Korea and China and demonstrate to the international community that Japan remained a peaceful nation with no intentions of reverting to past militarism. Unfortunately, hours before Koizumi's apology, over 80 members of Japan's parliament visited and made offerings to the Yasukuni Shrine. Thus, China had difficulty believing that Koizumi's apology was sincere. The Chinese foreign ministry positively commended Koizumi's expression of contrition but desired more from Japan. A Chinese spokesman stated “to express it is one aspect. What's of much more importance is the action. You have to make it a reality.”<sup>271</sup> Thus, contradictory actions had undercut Koizumi's words of apology.<sup>272</sup>

Public protests in China and Japan provoked further debate on the textbook issue in Japan. Over the next few months, cities and prefectures in Japan debated on whether to use the controversial textbook. To lessen the chance of public protest, the city of Otawara's board of education conducted meetings behind closed doors to debate the use of the textbook.<sup>273</sup> The Suginami Ward's board of education delayed its decision to vote

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<sup>269</sup> “Managing Unrest: Protests Against Japan Cause Official Unease in China.”

<sup>270</sup> “Koizumi Issues Rare War Apology,” *Japan Times*, April 23, 2005, [www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2005/04/23/national/koizumi-issues-rare-war-apology/#.V-sBt5MrLox](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2005/04/23/national/koizumi-issues-rare-war-apology/#.V-sBt5MrLox).

<sup>271</sup> Achmad Ibrahim, “China Dismisses Japanese Apology for War Aggression,” *USA Today*, April 22, 2005, [http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/2005-04-22-japan-china\\_x.htm](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/2005-04-22-japan-china_x.htm).

<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

<sup>273</sup> “City Ops to Use Revisionist Texts,” *Japan Times*, July 14, 2005, [www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2005/07/14/national/city-opts-to-use-revisionist-texts/#.V-sAG5MrLoy](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2005/07/14/national/city-opts-to-use-revisionist-texts/#.V-sAG5MrLoy).

on the use of the textbook due to public protests outside of its city hall.<sup>274</sup> Eventually only 0.4 percent of all junior high schools in Japan adopted the controversial textbook, which was an increase from 0.1 percent a few years earlier, but still a nominal percentage.<sup>275</sup>

These events suggest how inherent anti-Japanese public opinion transcends Chinese propaganda and elite-driven agendas. Here, the Chinese central authority suppressed demonstrations from getting out of hand. Even then, public outrage sometimes occurred without the endorsement of local authorities. Such was seen in the second week of protests that broke out in Shanghai after the Chinese central authorities issued statements to discourage the public from protesting.

These cases provide supporting evidence of the Chinese public's ability to shape Beijing's policy with Japan, and Japan's responses to demands and how this interaction deteriorates bilateral relations. Beijing could not ignore the massive and violent demonstrations by its own public. Forced to behave more insistently, Beijing blamed the violent protests on the Japanese government and demanded that Tokyo address the history issue. China asserted that Japanese action incited anti-Japanese public protests and had to be resolved by the Japanese government. Following nearly three weeks of protests, the Chinese central government had to crack down on further public demonstrations. In addition, Chinese officials took a harder stance against Japan's bid for a permanent seat at the UN, a position that was somewhat vague before the protests. As the public riots made international headlines, sympathizing protests broke out in Tokyo, with the protestors demanding the Japanese government apologize and correct the issue with China. International and domestic pressures forced the Japanese prime minister to issue a public apology for past Japanese wartime actions. Such an act is historically difficult for Japanese prime ministers because of domestic political pressures, since apologizing is seen as a loss of face and demeans Japan, by giving China the upper hand

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<sup>274</sup> "Suginami Delays Vote on Textbooks," *Japan Times*, August 5, 2005, [www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2005/08/05/national/suginami-delays-vote-on-textbooks/#.V-sANpMrLox](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2005/08/05/national/suginami-delays-vote-on-textbooks/#.V-sANpMrLox).

<sup>275</sup> Alexander Bukh, "Japan's History Textbook Debate: National Identity in Narratives of Victimhood and Victimization," *Asian Survey* 47, no. 5 (September/October 2007): 686, doi: 10.1525/as.2007.47.5.683.



in political morality.<sup>276</sup> In addition, Prime Minister Koizumi avoided visiting the Yasukuni Shrine during the anniversary of the end of the War in the Pacific—an action he had taken in the past. The protests also revealed Japanese politicians as divided in their reaction to the protests. A large number of conservative officials visited the Yasukuni Shrine in defiance of Prime Minister Koizumi's desire to repair relations through public apology for Japan's wartime crimes and militarism in Asia. Furthermore, such protests had lingering effects in Japan as each prefecture actively debated the use of the textbook for their students—a debate which rarely happened before. Thus, the public Chinese protests that erupted over Japan's bid for a permanent seat on the UNSC and the history textbook issue influenced Beijing's forceful attitude toward Japan. In turn, Japan was obligated to make apologies to calm Chinese public and official protests. This case strongly supports the hypothesis of anti-Japanese fervor that is ignited in response to controversial events and forces both Beijing and Tokyo to respond to its demands, plunging bilateral relations to one of the lowest periods in Sino-Japanese history.

### **5. Renewal of Yasukuni Shrine Visits by Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro**

Immediately before and during this time period, Koizumi Junichiro officially visited to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine every year during his tenure as prime minister, which further ignited anti-Japanese protests in China. Despite knowing the sensitivities regarding Yasukuni Shrine visits by Japanese dignitaries and their negative impact on Sino-Japanese relations, Koizumi vowed to visit the shrine every year that he was in office. Koizumi made six official visits—the most of any Japanese prime minister to date. Although Koizumi visited the shrine during the years of Sino-Japanese cooperation from 1999 to 2003, it reached in apex during this time period that became intolerable to the public.

To help deescalate Sino-Japanese tensions over the history issue and prevent the rise of public protest against Koizumi's shrine visits, the Chinese government insisted that Koizumi reconsider every visit, especially those on the anniversary date of the end of

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<sup>276</sup> Gries, *China's New Nationalism*, 23–28.

WWII in the Pacific. In 2001, Chinese foreign ministry officials warned Japan of the possible public protests that would result as Koizumi's visit would be perceived as a display of reverence and homage to war criminals.<sup>277</sup> Another press release by a Chinese official stated that "If Prime Minister Koizumi pays a visit to the shrine on August 15, it will draw broadsides from the Chinese people and I am worried that the visit may undermine the foundation of the friendly relationship between the two nations."<sup>278</sup> In 2001, Chinese officials even reached out to former LDP secretary generals to discourage Koizumi from visiting the shrine, but such efforts were futile.<sup>279</sup> Despite official Chinese warnings of public mobilization against Koizumi's first visit, protests were fairly benign and limited in scope. However, sources later revealed that Koizumi changed the date of his visit from August 15 to August 13 as a concession in response to the pressure received from Beijing and the Chinese public protests against his planned visit.<sup>280</sup>

However, Chinese historical and political activists refused to allow Koizumi to visit the shrine without protest. Chinese political activist Feng Jinhua infiltrated the Yasukuni Shrine on August 14, 2001, and painted the term *Gaisi* (go to hell) along the walls of the shrine.<sup>281</sup> Feng was arrested shortly thereafter and deported to China. Upon his return, he was deemed a public hero, labeled "China's backbone," and voted "Man of the Year" by the Chinese public in the popular *Southern Weekly* newspaper and by followers on *sina.com*'s website.<sup>282</sup>

In part to show support for the Chinese public's sentiments regarding the Yasukuni Shrine visits, Chinese leadership conveyed "strong dissatisfaction and indignation" over Koizumi's visit in 2001, and Jiang Zemin even refused to meet with

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<sup>277</sup> This was said by the Chinese foreign minister Tang who told his counterpart Tanaka Makiko at an ASEAN+3 meeting on July 24, 2001. As paraphrased by Ming Wan. M. Wan, *Sino-Japanese Relations*, 239.

<sup>278</sup> Chinese foreign minister Tang, as quoted by Ming Wan. Ibid.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid., 240–243.

<sup>281</sup> Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 99.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

Koizumi during the APEC talks in Shanghai.<sup>283</sup> However, even though Beijing was vocal in denouncing Koizumi's first visit to the Yasukuni Shrine in 2001, China exerted more effort to restrain public opinion to keep a manageable relationship with Japan.

Koizumi attempted to make amends with China and to quell any Chinese protest against his shrine visit by personally meeting with the Chinese premier and visiting one of China's most well-known historical war sites. On October 9, 2001, Koizumi visited the Museum of the War of Chinese Resistance against Japanese Aggression and openly apologized for Japan's wartime offenses in China on the *Lugou Qiao* or Marco Polo Bridge. Koizumi reaffirmed the 1995 Murayama apology to the Chinese public and publicly expressed remorse for Japan's wartime crimes. Koizumi stated that "I looked at the various exhibits with a feeling of heartfelt apology and condolences for those Chinese people who were victims of aggression."<sup>284</sup> Like Hashimoto before him, Koizumi hoped a visit and an open apology would appease Chinese leaders and their public constituency.<sup>285</sup>

The Chinese reacted to Koizumi's next two visits to the Yasukuni Shrine more moderately and the Chinese media highlighted celebrations and friendship-building initiatives. The media published little of Koizumi's visits however; the two countries postponed bilateral initiatives and meetings. The year 2002 became the "Year of Japan" in China.<sup>286</sup> The 16th Party Congress at the end of 2002 declared that it would "treat neighbors as friends; treat neighbors as partners."<sup>287</sup> Even after Koizumi's third visit to the shrine in 2003, Hu Jintao refrained from promulgating the history issue and promoted a more positive Sino-Japanese relationship. Even through Koizumi's visits irritated Sino-

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<sup>283</sup> M. Wan, *Sino-Japanese Relations*, 241–242.

<sup>284</sup> Erik Eckholm, "Japanese Leader, Visiting China, Is Mildly Rebuked on Army Role," *New York Times*, October 9, 2001, [www.nytimes.com/2001/10/09/world/japanese-leader-visiting-china-is-mildly-rebuked-on-army-role.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/09/world/japanese-leader-visiting-china-is-mildly-rebuked-on-army-role.html).

<sup>285</sup> M. Wan, *Sino-Japanese Relations*, 244–245.

<sup>286</sup> Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 132.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid.

Japanese relations, Hu Jintao took a more pragmatic, less emotional approach to bilateral relations by highlighting the positive aspects of economic cooperation.<sup>288</sup>

However, in 2004, the Chinese public became fed up and abandoned moderation over the visits. After Koizumi's fourth visit, public sentiments became almost overwhelming as official Chinese statements intensified when the central government allowed increased media coverage of the public's anti-Japanese rhetoric. The Chinese public's anti-Japanese sentiments regarding the history issue spread like wildfire on China's newfound Internet. Reilly quoted a Chinese Japan expert who stated that "as Koizumi kept going to Yasukuni, it became impossible for Beijing to compromise. The 'average people' in China would not have understood."<sup>289</sup> Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi stated that those enshrined at the Yasukuni Shrine had "hands [that] were stained with blood of Chinese and Asian Peoples" and in reference to Koizumi's visits said that "Chinese people absolutely cannot accept this type of betrayal."<sup>290</sup>

Koizumi's visits to the Yasukuni Shrine escalated volatile anti-Japanese sentiments in China. The Qiqihar chemical weapons explosions had already incited the public the year before. Editorials in Chinese papers and websites that hosted anti-Japanese ideals began to rise exponentially and cause even more outrage. As public opinion increased on the Internet, protests in front of the Japanese Embassy in Beijing and the Japanese consulate General Building in Shanghai garnered massive support. Protestors burned photos of Koizumi and Japanese flags on the streets. That summer, during the Asia Cup Soccer Tournament hosted by China, Chinese attendees booed and threw objects at Japanese players, protested Koizumi's visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, and declared Chinese sovereignty over the disputed islands.<sup>291</sup> Hence, evidence shows that the 2004 Yasukuni Shrine visit added more fuel to an already volatile situation as anti-

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<sup>288</sup> Ibid., 132–133.

<sup>289</sup> A Chinese Japan expert as quoted by James Reilly. Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 134.

<sup>290</sup> Wang Yi, as quoted by Ming Wan. M. Wan, *Sino-Japanese Relations*, 252.

<sup>291</sup> Jim Yardley, "In Soccer Loss, a Glimpse of China's Rising Ire at Japan," *New York Times*, August 9, 2004, [www.nytimes.com/2004/08/09/world/in-soccer-loss-a-glimpse-of-china-s-rising-ire-at-japan.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2004/08/09/world/in-soccer-loss-a-glimpse-of-china-s-rising-ire-at-japan.html); Sean Curtin, "Japan 3, China 1—But Both are Losers," *Asia Times*, August 10, 2004, [www.atimes.com/atimes/Japan/FH10Dh01.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Japan/FH10Dh01.html).

Japanese sentiments from the public became ignited yet again by another controversial event regarding the history issue. As a result, Chinese elites felt compelled to no longer contain public opinion and insisted that Japan respond by halting bilateral cooperation.<sup>292</sup>

Unlike his predecessors, Koizumi defended his visits to the Yasukuni Shrine every year that he was in office and did not follow Chinese demands to stop. However, visits to the Yasukuni Shrine did not lower his standing within his party nor his popular Japanese support. In 2004, a poll conducted by a Japanese newspaper *Asahi Shimbun* noted that Koizumi held a 50 percent support rating among the Japanese people, which was considered one of the highest during a prime minister's third year.<sup>293</sup> Chinese public riots did not break out in massive form as seen after Koizumi's last two visits in 2005 and 2006; however, anti-Japanese resentment and public condemnation of the events continued. Thus, negative Chinese public opinion did not discourage Koizumi from visiting the shrine. However, his visits instigated anti-Japanese resentment from the Chinese public, became a roadblock to Sino-Japanese cooperation, and contributed to negative bilateral relations during this time period.<sup>294</sup>

#### **D. PERIOD OF DISCORD: 2010–2016**

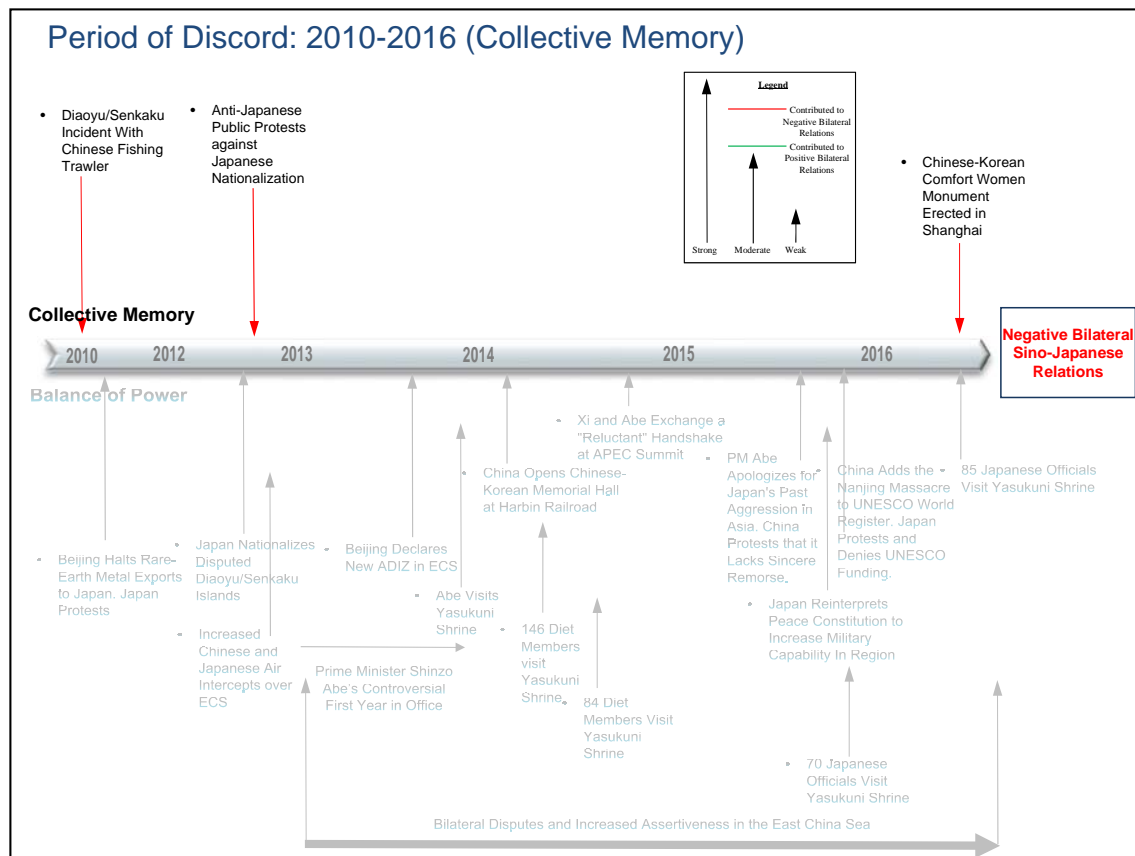
After a brief period of somewhat positive Sino-Japanese relations, anti-Japanese public opinion regarding the history issue began to increase in 2010 and threatened to harm bilateral relations in 2012. This thesis discusses one main history-issue-related event during this next period of discord or bilateral “coldness,” depicted in Figure 10, that stirred public protest and significant anti-Japanese demonstrations: the continued Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands disputes in 2012.

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<sup>292</sup> M. Wan, *Sino-Japanese Relations*, 252–254; Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 134.

<sup>293</sup> M. Wan, *Sino-Japanese Relations*, 254.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*, 251–261.



Collective memory played a weaker role in explaining Sino-Japanese discord during this time. Only the 2010 and 2012 Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands disputes and the more recent comfort women monument significantly contributed. History-related events are depicted as weak, moderate or strong contributions (arrow sizes) to either positive (green) or negative (red) Sino-Japanese relations. The upper half of the figure depicts events most affected by collective memory (Hypothesis 1). The lower half of the figure depicts events most affected by the balance of power (Hypothesis 2). For this thesis, arrow placement (above or below) was determined by which hypothesis better represented the event.

Figure 10. Period of Discord: 2010–2016 (Collective Memory)

## 1. The Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands Dispute, 2012

During this period, controversial Japanese actions regarding the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute once again stirred anti-Japanese sentiments in China, negatively shaping bilateral relations. In April 2012, in part to protest Prime Minister Noda's handling of the disputed islands, Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara began a fundraiser to purchase three of the five Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands from a private Japanese owner to officially develop them under Tokyo jurisdiction. To support the Tokyo governor's announcement, a right-wing

Japanese patriotic group consisting of six National Diet members and 114 activists boarded ships bound for the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. In response, political *Baodiao* activists from Hong Kong aboard a Taiwanese Coast Guard ship sailed to the contested islands to challenge Japanese claims. Chinese fishing vessels also began to increase their presence in the contested waters of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, which further heightened Sino-Japanese tensions. On the 81st anniversary of the end of WWII in the Pacific, a *Baodiao* group planted Chinese and Taiwanese flags on the islands, only to be detained by Okinawan authorities. Immediately following, another right-wing Japanese nationalist group conducted a ceremony that honored those Japanese servicemen who died in previous battles and raised the Japanese flag.<sup>295</sup>

In September, DPJ Prime Minister Noda Yoshihiko led his cabinet to approve a purchase of the islands for over 2.05 billion yen to prevent further Japanese right-wing attempts to develop the contested islands.<sup>296</sup> The foreign minister of Japan, Koichiro Genba, stated in a *New York Times* article that the purchase of the islands “was to minimize any adverse impact on the Japan-China relationship. . . [and] was the only viable and best option available to the government of Japan to protect bilateral relations.”<sup>297</sup> From Japan’s point of view, the purchase of the islands was necessary to prevent domestic factions from undermining the current administration’s authority and causing unnecessary political turmoil with China.<sup>298</sup>

However, the nationalization of the islands by the Government of Japan incited public resentment and engulfed China in a sea of anti-Japanese protest. Jeremy L. Wallace and Jessica Chen Weiss reported that over 320 public protests throughout various cities in China occurred within 30 days of Japan’s purchase of the

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<sup>295</sup> Reilly, “Wave to Worry About?” 208–209.

<sup>296</sup> Kiyoshi Takenaka, “Japan Buys Disputed Islands, China Sends Patrol Ships,” *Reuters*, September 11, 2012, [www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-china-idUSBRE88A0GY20120911](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-china-idUSBRE88A0GY20120911).

<sup>297</sup> Koichiro Genba, “Japan-China Relations at a Crossroads,” *New York Times*, November 20, 2012, [www.nytimes.com/2012/11/21/opinion/koichiro-genba-japan-china-relations-at-a-crossroads.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/21/opinion/koichiro-genba-japan-china-relations-at-a-crossroads.html).

<sup>298</sup> Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 236–238.

Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands.<sup>299</sup> Shortly thereafter, on the 81st anniversary of Japan's invasion of Manchuria, over 128 Chinese cities held anti-Japanese protests that further ignited the island dispute.<sup>300</sup>

The Chinese public interpreted the purchase as an expansion of Japanese militarism and nationalism. An online poll by the Guangzhou Research Institute noted that over 80 percent of respondents from almost 600 cities in China denounced Japan's nationalization of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands and believed it "was the most serious challenge to China's sovereignty since WWII."<sup>301</sup> Anti-Japanese reactions on various online websites by Chinese netizens and violent Chinese public demonstrations throughout China began to make international headlines. When the first announcement of the purchase was made, *sina.com* featured a protestor who rallied for supporters to "boycott Japanese goods . . . otherwise all the money we spend on Japanese goods will be used to buy bullets."<sup>302</sup> The author of another post on the same website stated that "without killing Japanese, I cannot relieve the hatred in my heart."<sup>303</sup> In Xian, Chinese activists stormed a previously Japanese-owned hotel in a rage, breaking windows and destroying furniture in protests against Japanese businesses.<sup>304</sup> In Qingdao, protestors targeted Japanese department and grocery stores, leaving the stores in shambles and breaking Japanese-made electronics and appliances as well as destroying imported Japanese goods.<sup>305</sup> Many Japanese factories and businesses in China were shut down to

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<sup>299</sup> Wallace and Weiss, "Political Geography," 405–406.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*, 406.

<sup>301</sup> This poll showed that 80 percent of the respondents concurred with a quote from the *Liberation Daily* that stated "Japan's purchase of the island was the most serious challenge to China's sovereignty since World War II." As quoted by James Reilly. Reilly, "Wave to Worry About?" 209.

<sup>302</sup> Peter Hays Gries, Derek Steiger, and Tao Wang, "Popular Nationalism and China's Japan Policy: The Diaoyu Islands Protests, 2012–2013," *Journal of Contemporary China* 25, no. 98 (2016): 264, doi: 10.1080/10670564.2015.1075714.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>304</sup> "Protesters in Islands Row Vent Fury on Japanese Firms: Hotels and Supermarkets Targeted as Islands Anger Spreads Across Cities," *South China Morning Post*, September 16, 2012, [www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1037977/protesters-islands-row-vent-fury-japanese-firms](http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1037977/protesters-islands-row-vent-fury-japanese-firms).

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*



avoid public vandalism.<sup>306</sup> The Chinese deployed over 200 riot control police in Shanghai to control the protests in front of the Japanese consulate buildings.<sup>307</sup> Angry demonstrators took to the streets burning the imperial and current Japanese flags chanting “Declare war!” and “Kill all Japanese.”<sup>308</sup> The state-censored *People’s Daily* newspaper published an editorial that proclaimed “no one would doubt the pulses of patriotic fervor when the motherland is bullied.”<sup>309</sup> An online message to the PLA exhorted the Chinese military to “start fighting! There are 1.3 billion people backing you.”<sup>310</sup> The *Beijing Evening News* even posted on a blog site to “just serve [Japan] with the main course of nuclear missiles and all the troubles will be saved.”<sup>311</sup> Although the authorities quickly deleted the *Beijing Evening News* blog, its suggestion to escalate the issue by extreme force became hotly debated.

As protests became more unruly, and in some cases, more critical of the CCP’s policies, the central government issued more repressive measures against demonstrators. In September 2012, the *China Digital Times* published regulations for public protests. Such rules allowed protestors in designated areas in groups of only 100 at a time—those in front receiving the most media attention could not smile or talk on cell phones but could wave distributed Chinese flags, sing the national anthem, and chant mandatory anti-Japanese slogans.<sup>312</sup> In addition, protestors could only chant slogans for

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<sup>306</sup> Protestors torched a Panasonic factory and robbed a Toyota dealership. Ian Johnson and Thom Shanker, “Beijing Mixes Messages Over Anti-Japan Protests,” *New York Times*, September 12, 2012, [www.nytimes.com/2012/09/17/world/asia/anti-japanese-protests-over-disputed-islands-continue-in-china.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/17/world/asia/anti-japanese-protests-over-disputed-islands-continue-in-china.html?_r=0).

<sup>307</sup> “Protesters in Islands Row Vent Fury on Japanese Firms.”

<sup>308</sup> Gries, Steiger, and Wang, “Popular Nationalism,” 265.

<sup>309</sup> Johnson and Shanker, “Beijing Mixes Messages.”

<sup>310</sup> Gries, Steiger, and Wang, “Popular Nationalism,” 265.

<sup>311</sup> Raymond Li, “Papers Go Ballistic over Diaoyu Dispute with Japan: Islands in a Storm of Rhetoric, With One Daily Suggesting ‘Serving Main Course of Nuclear Missiles,’” *South China Morning Post*, September 16, 2012, [www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/1037887/papers-go-ballistic-over-diaoyu-dispute-japan](http://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/1037887/papers-go-ballistic-over-diaoyu-dispute-japan).

<sup>312</sup> Ming Pao, “Rules for Anti-Japan Protests: Strict Control over Anti-Japanese Demonstrations: Public Employees Forbidden to Encourage or Take Part,” *China Digital Times*, September 16, 2012, <http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2012/09/ming-pao-rules-for-anti-japan-protests/>.

approximately five minutes; then, they were to disperse after handing their Chinese flags to the next wave of protestors.<sup>313</sup>

Near the time of the 81st anniversary of Japan's invasion of Manchuria, Chinese officials warned all local authorities to maintain control of their protestors and threatened to prosecute Chinese citizens who violated the law. Hong Kong reporter Ming Pao observed that the media was restricted in its coverage of the protests as "breaking information from the street must be strictly controlled."<sup>314</sup> To ensure control over the looming wave of public mass mobilization, Chinese authorities temporarily blocked the following words on *Sina Weibo*: "*anti-Japan* (反日 or 抗日)"; "*smash + car* (砸+车)"; "*smash* (打砸)"; "*protest* (抗议)"; "*take a walk* (散步)", which refers to marching protests; "*demonstrate* (游行)"; "*assembly* (集会)"; "*demonstration* (示威)"; "*beating, smashing, and looting* (打砸抢)"; and "*Liangmaqiao* (亮马桥), the location of the Japanese Embassy in Beijing."<sup>315</sup> Furthermore, text messages sent by state officials and state-run media editorials admonished Chinese citizens about protests and asked the public to suppress their violent anger and endorse "sensible patriotism" and "levelheadedness."<sup>316</sup> Although protestors could rally and demonstrate against Japan's purchase of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, the Chinese central authority limited the size and impact of public mobilization.

Because of the massive anti-Japanese protests over the island purchase, Chinese elites needed to maintain credibility with their constituents and address public demands. Leadership changes at the highest level during the 18th National Party Congress did not allow the new Chinese elites to seem weak on Japan. From this incident to the present

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<sup>313</sup> Ibid.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid.

<sup>315</sup> "Sensitive Words: Anti-Japan Protests (2)," *China Digital Times*, September 19, 2012, posted by Anne Henochowicz, <http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2012/09/sensitive-words-anti-japan-protests-2/>; "Sensitive Words: Trials, Looting and Liver Cancer," *China Digital Times*, September 18, 2012, posted by Anne Henochowicz, <http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2012/09/sensitive-words-trials-looting-and-liver-cancer/>.

<sup>316</sup> William Wan, "Beijing Both Encourages and Reins in Anti-Japan Protests, Analysts Say," *Washington Post*, September 17, 2012, [www.washingtonpost.com/world/chinese-government-both-encourages-and-reins-in-anti-japan-protests-analysts-say/2012/09/17/53144ff0-00d8-11e2-b260-32f4a8db9b7e\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/chinese-government-both-encourages-and-reins-in-anti-japan-protests-analysts-say/2012/09/17/53144ff0-00d8-11e2-b260-32f4a8db9b7e_story.html); Reilly, "Wave to Worry About?" 211.

day, Chinese armed forces have increased their maritime and air patrols around the disputed islands. To confirm Chinese sovereignty over the islands, the government authorized state-run Chinese websites to advocate for Chinese sovereignty to the international world. The CCP confirmed the sovereignty of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands as a core interest and the dispute was no longer shelved for a later time. As a result, anti-Japanese public protests over the islands dispute contributed to the CCP's toughened policies against Japan, which negatively affected bilateral relations.<sup>317</sup>

Massive public protests in China caught the Japanese leadership off guard since they failed to recognize China's perceptions and the consequences of their actions. Prime Minister Noda believed he was maintaining the status quo by only transferring over title of the islands from a private to a public owner to prevent any nationalist movements from developing the islands. However, Ishihara's threat to develop the islands under Tokyo's jurisdiction forced Japan to purchase the islands and ignited strong anti-Japanese resentment from China. This resulted in the international embarrassment and the internal demise of a weak Japanese administration. In a sense, Chinese public protests shaped domestic politics, to some degree, in Japan. Japanese Prime Minister Noda lost credibility and popularity among his constituents, in part, because of his mismanagement of the Diaoyu/Senkaku disputes. This case shows that anti-Japanese sentiments in China, which stem from the history issue, manifest themselves in the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute and threaten to harm relations. Furthermore, anti-Japanese protests encourage Chinese elites to solidify their attitudes toward Japan, escalate assertiveness in the ECS, and also shape internal Japanese politics.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

Evidence in this chapter strongly supports that deeply embedded anti-Japanese sentiments of Chinese citizens stem from collective memories that are reinforced by the government, are triggered by controversial Japanese actions, and have considerable influence on

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<sup>317</sup> Reinhard Drifte, "The Japan-China Confrontation over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands—Between "Shelving" and "Dispute Escalation," *Asia-Pacific Journal* 12, issue 30, no. 3 (July 2014): 1, 4, 22–41, <http://apjjf.org/2014/12/30/Reinhard-Drifte/4154/article.html>.

negative Sino-Japanese relations. An analysis of anti-Japanese public opinion during the three main periods of discord demonstrates the power of the Chinese public to shape bilateral relations.

The first period of discord from 1989 to 1998 had two main events that sparked anti-Japanese fervor: the revival of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Island dispute, and the Yasukuni Shrine visit by Prime Minister Hashimoto. These incidents caused the activation of anti-Japanese sentiments that manifested into public protests that forced Beijing to harden its stance against Japan and encouraged Tokyo to take action to appease the Chinese public, which strained diplomatic relations.

The intensity of public anti-Japanese sentiments from 2001 to 2006 qualifies this time as the most discordant of the three periods. The sheer number and degree of anti-Japanese protests and mass demonstrations in China strongly supports the existence of a collective narrative in the Chinese people that is incited by inflammatory Japanese actions over historical issues. The Chinese could not forget the history issue nor allow any leniency to what they considered inexcusable Japanese actions of Japanese militarism and historical amnesia. Such public protests made international headlines and highlighted historical grievances throughout the globe, causing both countries to blame one another for instigating such sentiments and effectively stalling high-level negotiations until historical grievances could be resolved. Thus, collective memory was a contributor to Sino-Japanese setbacks during this time.

However, after 2012, Chinese public protests and rise of anti-Japanese sentiments after the Japanese purchase of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands only weakly contributed to the downturn of bilateral relations. Although the historical island disputes are a key example of how anti-Japanese collective memories in China can force the Chinese elites to ossify their policies against Japan, the remainder of the time period showed weaker support for this hypothesis in explaining the downturn of bilateral relations. From 2012 to 2016, anti-Japanese sentiments remained latent despite many controversial actions by hawkish Japanese leadership, as demonstrated in the following chapter.

Further analysis shows that anti-Japanese sentiments in China have a limited ability to autonomously influence bilateral relations. Ultimately, the Chinese central government has the final say. However, after analyzing specific events in all three periods of discord, a constructivist social interaction between society and the CCP leadership can limit or demand responses from one another, which can determine the degree of impact on Sino-Japanese relations. Perhaps this could be an opportunity for both sides to use each other to satisfy overlapping interests regarding Japan. The CCP has developed a system to successfully tolerate, filter, repress, or censor anti-Japanese public opinion while appearing both patriotic and “democratic” by addressing the demands of its citizens and using such demands, stemmed from the genuine collective remembrance of the people, as foreign policy bargaining leverage to serve national interests. Concurrently, Chinese citizens exercise their limited right to access the media, use the Internet, engage in public local elections and local town hall meetings, join NGOs, and become historical and political activists to promote China’s anti-Japanese national identity. In a sense, the citizens and the elites serve each other’s interests regarding historical disputes with Japan, which can determine when and how to escalate China’s inherent anti-Japanese sentiments that ultimately shape the nature of the relationship. Regardless of this dynamic, the impact of the public’s anti-Japanese sentiments that stem from its collective memory and its effect on Sino-Japanese relations should not be not devalued.

## **IV. BALANCE OF POWER**

This chapter confirms China's exploitation of history as a strategic tool in foreign policy with Japan, which results in a competitive relationship to gain an advantage of relative power. This chapter concludes that while the Chinese people have valid historical and emotional reasons for anti-Japanese sentiment, the government's resort to blame and calls to national repentance are made in pursuit of shaping and constraining Japan's foreign policy behavior. When Beijing perceives threats from Japan as to national security, economics, or regional influence, it typically alleges that friction between the nations stem from Japan's perpetual militaristic ambition and past aggression. In doing so, Beijing uses history to ensure that Japan is forced to be less active and less involved in regional and global affairs—this helps improve China's power position. Hence, when China is concerned about Japan, China plays the history card and calls attention to Japan's past atrocities and its present lack of contrition to gain an advantage in the balance of power among states in East Asia, which negatively affects Sino-Japanese relations.

A review of specific events involving Beijing's promulgation of history to maximize its relative power during the three periods of discord (1989–1999, 2003–2006, 2010–2016) reveals how China magnifies Japan's past aggression for realpolitik reasons. Such reasons include justifying aggressive action in the ECS to support Chinese national interests or containing Japanese militaristic ambitions that pose a threat to China's power. In contrast, during Sino-Japanese periods of cooperation, Beijing rarely complained of Japan's historic past as China did not see a threat or power challenge from Japan nor did it see the need to use history to contain Japanese power in the region. Although China's use of its historical trauma as a strategic tool of power was evident in all three negative periods, as shown in Figures 11, 12, and 13, it played a comparatively moderate role in the first period (1989–1999), a weak to moderate role in the second period (2003–2006), and a strong role in the third period (2010–2016) in accounting for the downturn of bilateral relations. Specific events during each of the main periods of discord are discussed in detail to assess how threat perceptions of Japanese power has encouraged

China to use its historical trauma to contain Japanese ambitions in Asia and justify actions to maximize China's own relative power and influence in the region. However, China must carefully weigh its use of history in maintaining the advantage in the balance of power as overuse can backfire. To illustrate this dynamic, cases of Sino-Japanese discord in 1989–1999, 2003–2006, and 2010–2016 are examined.

#### **A. BALANCE OF POWER IN EAST ASIA**

As the two largest powers in East Asia, China and Japan are constantly trying to maximize their relative power to ensure the security of their national interests. However, when China feels threatened by Japan, China uses its traumatic history to limit Japan's influence in the region and justify domestic policies to support national interests to strengthen its power over Japan. As the balance of power theory suggests, in a self-help world with no overarching authority to adjudicate matters, regional states will take actions to maximize their own relative power to ensure sovereignty and protect themselves from potential threats.<sup>318</sup> However in a world of constrained resources, actions that a state takes to maximize its power creates a competitive environment that will likely come at the expense of others and contribute to a downturn of relations. Thus, competitive states may find themselves unable to cooperate and driven to conflict due to this state of anarchy.<sup>319</sup> As highlighted in all three periods of discord, when China feels that its national interests are threatened, China will use the advantageous resource of its moral advantage to win the upper hand of power over Japan, which comes at the expense of cooperative relations.

Robert Gilpin further notes that the disequilibrium of the international system caused by the changes in power distribution among rising and falling states creates a conflict-prone environment due to the changes to the status quo.<sup>320</sup> Kenneth Waltz,

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<sup>318</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 88, 91–92, 104–106, 109, 111, 118–120; Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 29–39.

<sup>319</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 127–128; Kenneth Waltz, "Structural Realism After the Cold War," *International Security*, 25, no. 1 (Summer 2005): 33, [www.columbia.edu/itc/sipa/U6800/readings-sm/Waltz\\_Structural%20Realism.pdf](http://www.columbia.edu/itc/sipa/U6800/readings-sm/Waltz_Structural%20Realism.pdf).

<sup>320</sup> Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, 186–187.

Robert Gilpin, John Mearsheimer, and Aaron L. Friedberg further observe that power transitions among states may lead to conflict.<sup>321</sup> In applying this logic to history's influence on the periods of discord in Sino-Japanese relations, we see that when a rising power like China is dissatisfied with its place in the hierarchy among states, it may attempt to upset the international status quo to seek a resolution of past injustices and historical disputes to accommodate its newfound higher status in the international system. China may also use the history card to justify forcible means to create more favorable conditions and coerce Japan to recognize its newfound importance and put Japan at a power disadvantage. Meanwhile, falling states like Japan may take forcible action to thwart China's ambitious power and protect the existing state of affairs. Thus, unresolved historical disputes have only exacerbated the problems resulting from the gradual regional power transition between China and Japan, making cooperative relations difficult.

Thus, when China feels threatened by Japan, it will use the history card to maintain the advantage in the relative balance of power. In addition, Beijing's use of history has been emboldened by China's rise in the gradual power transition between both countries. Both of these conditions have become significant contributing factors to specific history issue incidences during the three main periods of Sino-Japanese discord discussed in this chapter.

## **B. PERIOD OF DISCORD: 1989–1999**

The year 1989 was a turning point in Sino-Japanese relations. Chinese domestic unrest resulting from the Tiananmen Square incident along with the end of the Cold War contributed to a downturn of bilateral relations. China surged a propaganda campaign to relegitimize the CCP's authoritarian rule over its people and reopened emotional wounds, which stirred public motivation to resent Japanese past aggression. Meanwhile, the end of

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<sup>321</sup> Waltz, "Structural Realism," 187, 197; Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 29–39, 168–172; Mearsheimer, "China's Unpeaceful Rise," 160–162; Friedberg, "Future of U.S.-China Relations," 16–24.



the Cold War, namely the collapse of the Soviet Union, precipitated structural changes in the international order, leading China and Japan to shift from allies to rivals. Beijing no longer saw the need to ally with Japan to balance against its rival to the north. Rather, the post–Cold War order created an environment where the two largest powers in East Asia would take actions to maximize their own security while attempting to contain the military capabilities of the other. Hence, during this time, China and Japan once again became rivals and began a gradual spiraling security dilemma which reignited historical animosities in the region.<sup>322</sup>

Although Sino-Japanese relations were characterized by sporadic cooperation from 1989 to 1999, several events led to an overall deterioration by decade’s end. Sino-Japanese relations took a significant downturn starting with Japan’s protest of Chinese nuclear weapons testing in 1995. After China responded by criticizing Japan for meddling in its internal affairs, Japan exerted pressure by halting ODA to China, thus refusing to support China’s nuclear program. Meanwhile, China escalated the conflict by launching military exercises and missile tests that threatened Taiwanese sovereignty in the region and nearly precipitated war with the United States. As the United States and Japan reexamined their security alliance, China perceived the activity as a new threat to its regional interests and developed harsher policies toward Japan. A visit by Japan’s prime minister to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine, memorializing Japanese war dead, alarmed the Chinese people of Japan’s inherent militaristic instincts. Meanwhile, the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands sovereignty disputes strained bilateral cooperation, while Chinese demands for a written, heartfelt apology for the Sino-Japanese wars exacerbated friction.<sup>323</sup>

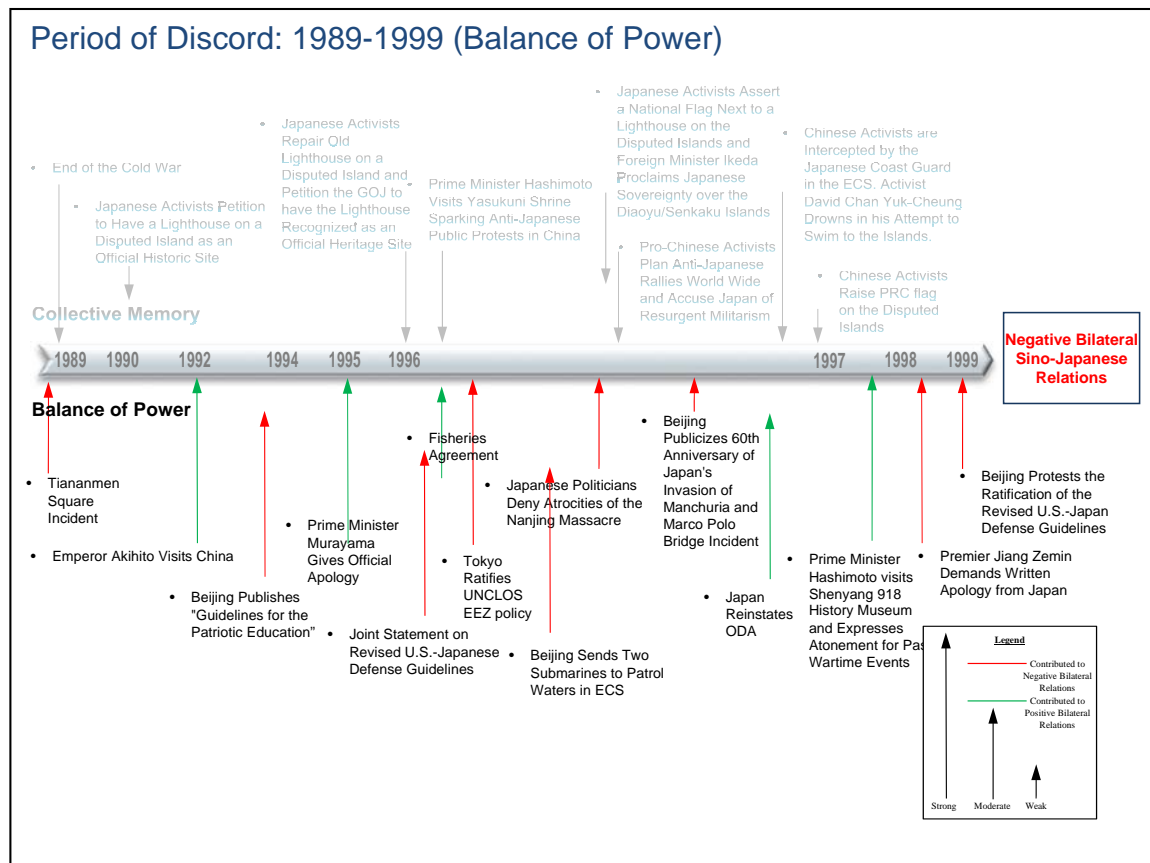
While all these events contributed to 10 years of discord, this chapter focuses on three issues, shown on Figure 11, in which China made heavy use of Japan’s historical sins to preserve national interests, contain Japanese power ambitions, and gain an

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<sup>322</sup> M. Wan, *Sino-Japanese Relations*, 201–211, 231–232; Waltz, “Structural Realism,” 28–30, 32–38; Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 96–122; Yahuda, *Two Tigers*, 24–26.

<sup>323</sup> Yahuda, *Two Tigers*, 24–36; Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 188–199.

advantage of power in East Asia: the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands disputes, the revision of the U.S.-Japanese security guidelines, and Chinese Premier Jiang Zemin's visit to Japan in 1998.



Balance of power played a moderate role in explaining the downturn of bilateral relations during this period. History-related events are depicted as weak, moderate, or strong (arrow sizes) and either positive (green) or negative (red) contributors to Sino-Japanese relations. The upper half of the figure depicts events more affected by collective memory (Hypothesis 1). The lower half of the figure depicts events more affected by the balance of power (Hypothesis 2). Both collective memory and balance of power permeated many of the same events, but, for this thesis, arrow placement was determined by which hypothesis better represented the event..

Figure 11. Period of Discord: 1989–1999 (Balance of Power)

## 1. The Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands Dispute, 1990s

China and Japan's competing claims to a chain of ECS islands known as the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands have been a chronic source of hostility that came to a head in

1990, 1996, and 1999–2000 and strongly contributed to the downturn of bilateral relations. China claims that it has substantial evidence of island sovereignty, as early as the 14th century, and that the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands were illegally appropriated as a colonial territory by Japan in the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895. Relying on the United Nations charter of 1945, which prohibits the use of force in acquiring land, China argues that Japan's claim is illegitimate since it gained the territory as a spoil of the First Sino-Japanese War.<sup>324</sup> China asserts moreover that the Cairo Communiqué, the Treaty of Potsdam, and the San Francisco Peace Treaty dictated that Japan surrender the islands. Professor Ryoko Nakano of the National University of Singapore argues that China's territorial claims in the ECS are rooted in the ideational matter of justice by which a nation's traumatic history and violated sovereignty are appeased and requited by the return of any lost territory taken by force.<sup>325</sup> Consistent with this posture, Beijing cites Japan's history of conquest and grave injustice toward China as undermining any Japanese acquisition and interprets increased military activity and defense of the islands by Japan as evidence of creeping militarism.<sup>326</sup>

Japan counters that the islands were never Chinese and were claimed as *terra nullis* (no man's land) in the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895; that the Treaty of Potsdam is silent on the Diaoyu/Senkaku island chain; and that China asserted sovereignty only in the 1960s, after rich natural resources were discovered in the surrounding waters. Japan asserts that international law has recognized its territorial rights to the islands since the end of WWII. Compounding the terrestrial disputes in the area, Japan and China also disagree as to the boundaries of their national EEZs and ADIZs, which overlap in the waters around the island chain.<sup>327</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> Ryoko Nakano, "The Sino-Japanese Territorial Dispute and Threat Perception in Power Transition," *Pacific Review* 29, no. 2 (2016): 171–172, doi: 10.1080/09512748.2015.1013493.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid.

<sup>326</sup> Drifte, "Japan-China Confrontation," 1–6.

<sup>327</sup> Ibid., 1–8, 11–15.

While neither side is willing to abandon its claims, China won some concessions in 1990 after characterizing Japan's formal recognition of a lighthouse as a demonstration of Tokyo's hegemonic ambitions and nascent right-wing militarism. Protests broke out all over China as the public expressed fears that this construction supported Japanese aspirations for control and invasion of Chinese territory. To mollify critics and reassure China as to his peaceful intentions in the ECS, Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu agreed to open bilateral discussions to negotiate joint exploration and fishing treaties in the disputed waters. Kaifu also conceded that Japan would not consider the lighthouse an official beacon or dispatch self-defense force (SDF) troops to defend its claims. To further atone for arousing historical resentments and long memories, Japan ended its economic ban and approved a loan of 810 billion yen of ODA to boost the Chinese economy.<sup>328</sup> These actions led the way for other nations to resume trade and loans and to lift global economic sanctions imposed after the Tiananmen Square incident of 1989. Thus, China successfully used its baleful history with Japan to garner economic benefits and reinforce its interests in the ECS.<sup>329</sup>

In July and August 1996, a tumbling sequence of Japanese actions strongly validated China's allegation that Japan lacked remorse for its war crimes in WWII. During this time, Japanese activists constructed another lighthouse and petitioned the government to have it recognized as an official heritage site. At the same time, Tokyo ratified the UNCLOS policy, which allows Japan to defend a 200-nm EEZ that overlaps with China's EEZ in the ECS. The UNCLOS policy also recognizes the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands as Japanese territory. Besides these provocations, revised U.S.–Japan security/defense guidelines were announced that expanded Japan's military and security roles in the region. Shortly thereafter, Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto made an

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<sup>328</sup> M. Wan, *Sino-Japanese Relations*, 24, 264–265.

<sup>329</sup> Wiegand, "China's Strategy in the Senkaku/Diaoyu," 181–182; Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 189–190.

official visit to the Yasukuni Shrine and a right-wing politician received considerable media attention by insisting that the Chinese government fabricated the Nanking Incident to embarrass Japan and provoke anti-Japanese sentiment. Shortly after, a Japanese nationalist group physically proclaimed Japanese sovereignty on one of the disputed islands, erected a Shinto shrine, planted a Japanese imperial flag, and conducted a ceremony to honor Japanese soldiers slain in WWII. From the Chinese perspective, this roster of outrages confirmed Japan's unrepentance for its transgressions in Asia. In addition, Japanese official support given to nationalistic actions in the ECS were an indication of Tokyo's growing militarism—a familiar historical sentiment.<sup>330</sup>

These and other Japanese actions prompted an aggressive Chinese military response and ignited severe protests and demonstrations in China. Beijing further escalated tensions by deploying two ballistic submarines to defend China's claim to the disputed islands.<sup>331</sup> A spokesman for the foreign ministry, Shen Guofeng, castigated Japanese actions and historical amnesia and threatened to suspend diplomatic relations, stating

giving a green light to these actions and remarks of the Japanese right-wing groups . . . Japan has failed to arrive at what is a right understanding of history. The Japanese government therefore should have a sober-minded perspective and clear understanding as regards this issue. Otherwise, Sino-Japanese relations would be seriously affected.<sup>332</sup>

The following year, Beijing denounced Japanese aggression and fueled the uproar by publicizing the 60th anniversary of the invasion of Manchuria and the Marco Polo Bridge incident. Chinese officials gave little attention to the concurrent 25th anniversary

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<sup>330</sup> Wiegand, "China's Strategy in the Senkaku/Diaoyu," 182–185; June Teufel Dreyer, "Sino-Japanese Relations," *Journal of Contemporary China* 10, no. 28, (2001): 377–378, doi: 10.1080/10670560120067081.

<sup>331</sup> Wiegand, "China's Strategy in the Senkaku/Diaoyu," 183.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid.

of normalized Sino-Japanese relations.<sup>333</sup> This spotlight on Japanese remorselessness and misdeeds was important in justifying future escalation of Chinese military activity in the ECS.

From 1999 to 2000, a number of widely publicized statements by Japanese officials reinforced China's fears. As governor of Tokyo in 1999, Ishihara Shintaro accused China of using Japanese ODA to boost its weapons program.<sup>334</sup> Vice Minister of Parliament Nishimura Shingo advocated that Japanese aircraft carriers defend sea lanes around Taiwan and Japanese territories in the ECS and suggested that Japan develop a nuclear weapons program.<sup>335</sup> The implicit support given to these outspoken politicians in Japan was widespread and, to China, dangerous. Tensions centered on the ECS continued through 2000, when Japanese activists built a shrine on another disputed island, exciting renewed protest from China.<sup>336</sup>

In reaction to Japanese rhetoric in 1999 and inflammatory activism in 2000, China attacked Japan repeatedly for its selective memory and ineradicable militarism, while increasing surveillance patrols in the ECS. A memorial war garden was opened in the heart of Beijing, featuring sculpture groups depicting imperial war crimes. A Chinese petition was made to have the WWII Japanese experimental germ-warfare base in Harbin named a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) world-heritage site.<sup>337</sup> China also found implicit militarism in a program of regional antipiracy exercises by the Japanese navy. To express indignation against Japan's maritime exercises and other examples of militarism, Beijing cancelled a visit by Japanese transportation minister Morita Hajime because of his recent visit to the Yasukuni Shrine. In the latter part of 2000, China stepped up ECS surveillance patrols

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<sup>333</sup> Dreyer, "Sino-Japanese Relations," 378.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid., 380–381.

<sup>335</sup> Ibid.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid., 380–383.

<sup>337</sup> "China Wants WWII Germ Warfare Test Base to be on World Heritage List," *People's Daily*, August 16, 2000, [http://en.people.cn/english/200008/16/eng20000816\\_48302.html](http://en.people.cn/english/200008/16/eng20000816_48302.html).

around the Japanese EEZ. As before, historical narratives were invoked to justify these actions, providing Beijing with an excuse to drop diplomatic negotiations, flex military force, and assert Chinese dominance in the region. Hence, when China felt its security interests in the ECS were threatened, China highlighted Japan's past and used history to justify more assertive actions to counter Japanese control over the islands. In addition, when Japan would express nationalist sentiments or convey ideas supporting the expansion of its power, China reopened the wounds of history by commemorating events related to Japan's wartime atrocities further downgrading relations.<sup>338</sup>

## **2. Chinese Reaction to U.S.–Japan Security Developments, 1996 and 1999**

The U.S.-Japanese security alliance was long seen by China as a U.S. containment of Japanese military capacity; but in 1996, China shifted its view upon the release of new U.S.-Japanese defense guidelines that it perceived as containing Chinese capabilities and encouraging Japanese military expansion under U.S. auspices.<sup>339</sup> China viewed the alliance as mutually coercive toward China, allowing Japan to disguise its ulterior militaristic motives while giving the United States a legal footing for containing Chinese ambition.<sup>340</sup> With China as a new target of the revised guidelines, the alliance now enabled greater Japanese defense capabilities—potentially opening the door for a revival of Japanese militarism—and suggested a possible loosening of strictures in Japan's “peace constitution.”<sup>341</sup> Beijing also identified assertive new policies regarding U.S.-Japanese research on a theater missile defense (TMD) program that could potentially be

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<sup>338</sup> Dreyer, “Sino-Japanese Relations,” 380–384.

<sup>339</sup> Garrett and Glaser, “Chinese Apprehension,” 388.

<sup>340</sup> Although this article was written in 2015, this sentiment still applies to several revised defense guidelines since 1996. Bonnie S. Glaser and Brittney Farrar, “Through Beijing's Eyes: How China Sees the U.S.-Japan Alliance,” *National Interest*, May 12, 2015, <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/through-beijings-eyes-how-china-sees-the-us-japan-alliance-12864>.

<sup>341</sup> Japan's “peace constitution” was created under the supervision of the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP) during U.S. occupation after World War II. It is considered a “peace constitution” because Article 9 states that Japan must forever renounce war and can no longer use force to resolve diplomatic disputes. It also does not allow Japan to possess a formal military (air, sea, land) to be used for fighting wars. Thus, Japan only has a “self-defense” force. It was meant as a preventative measure to ensure that Japan does not possess the capability to remilitarize and start wars like it did before World War II. Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 394–397.

used offensively against China.<sup>342</sup> The new guidelines were a hot issue through the late 1990s and were used by China to justify increasing its inventory of both defensive and offensive weapons and beefing up its response capabilities to meet any challenges presented by the revised Japanese and U.S. roles in the alliance.<sup>343</sup>

The 1996 revised defense policies caution the international community of the growing threat of China, to which a senior Chinese analyst retorted that the U.S.-Japanese security alliance makes “China the new objective.”<sup>344</sup> The guidelines list situations capable of threatening regional Asian-Pacific stability as including “unresolved territorial disputes, potential regional conflicts, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction,”<sup>345</sup> all three of which apply to China. Thus, Beijing’s aggressive actions in the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute and Taiwan Straits crisis and its nuclear weapons program are key issues in the revised alliance. The guidelines call for China to “play a positive and constructive role” in ensuring the political security of the region.<sup>346</sup> But the changes in American troop levels, agreements to exchange and develop military technology and systems, and the potential development of joint military bases discussed in the plan served to strengthen the American presence in East Asia and improve Japanese clout. Ultimately, China’s vehement protests and saber rattling created a stronger security posture for Japan, more U.S. military presence in East Asia, and a closer U.S.-Japanese alliance.<sup>347</sup>

China fears and resents Japan’s increased involvement in regional security problems as encouraging militarism and violating Article 9—the peace provisions of the

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<sup>342</sup> Arthur S. Ding, “Viewpoint: China’s Concerns about Theater Missile Defense: A Critique,” *Nonproliferation Review* 6, Issue 4, (Fall 1999): 93, doi: 10.1080/10736709908436782.

<sup>343</sup> Wu Xinbo, “The End of the Silver Lining: A Chinese View of the U.S.-Japanese Alliance,” *Washington Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (Winter 2005–06): 119–130, [www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/xinbo20060101.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/xinbo20060101.pdf).

<sup>344</sup> Zhou Jihua, from the Chinese Academy of Social Science (CASS) Institute quoted by Garrett and Glaser. Garrett and Glaser, “Chinese Apprehension,” 388.

<sup>345</sup> “Japan-U.S. Joint Declaration on Security—Alliance for the 21st Century.”

<sup>346</sup> Ibid.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid.



Japanese constitution. Thomas Christiansen finds that many China analysts anticipate that the strengthened SDF capabilities and roles within the alliance may nurse the Japanese tendency to nationalism, unraveling its postwar pacifistic culture and removing restraints against the use of force in political matters.<sup>348</sup> Banning Garrett and Bonnie Glaser note that Chinese scholars warn that allowing Japan to build up its military for collective self-defense may open the door to increased regional aggression.<sup>349</sup> Another Chinese analyst warned Garrett and Glaser of Japan's history of claiming self-defense in justifying regional force and noted that "after World War I, the Japanese government invaded Shandong under the excuse of rescuing its citizens."<sup>350</sup> Chinese elites echo these sentiments, cautioning that the modified alliance encourages Japanese national patterns that have been a root cause of aggression against Chinese sovereignty in the past.<sup>351</sup> Thus Sino-Japanese history is cited as a reason to oppose stronger security measures for Japan.

Chinese elites argued that the peace provisions in Article 9 were a necessary control to prevent Japan from reverting to its inherent militarism.<sup>352</sup> Chinese scholars have expressed concerns that the revised agreement presented an opportunity to remove limitations on armed conflict and empower a nationalistic agenda. An article in the *People's Daily* warned that if Japan tried to reinterpret or revise Article 9 to strengthen its military, there was "reason to worry that Japan will move towards remilitarization."<sup>353</sup> A prominent Chinese scholar noted that the revised alliance no longer provided a "cork in the bottle" to contain Japan, but was merely an "eggshell for Japan to develop its conventional high-tech military strength."<sup>354</sup> China feared that constitutional changes would give Japan legal authority to back up diplomacy with military force.

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<sup>348</sup> Thomas Christensen, "Security Dilemma in East Asia," 55–58.

<sup>349</sup> Garrett and Glaser, "Chinese Apprehension," 391.

<sup>350</sup> Ibid.

<sup>351</sup> Dreyer, "Sino-Japanese Relations," 377–378.

<sup>352</sup> Christensen, "Security Dilemma in East Asia," 56; Dreyer, "Sino-Japanese Relations," 373.

<sup>353</sup> Garrett and Glaser, "Chinese Apprehension," 391.

<sup>354</sup> Liu Jiangyong from the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) is quoted by James Reilly. Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State*, 161.

Beijing insisted that development of a joint U.S.-Japanese TMD program, even if ostensibly for defense, would strengthen Japan's offensive capabilities against China.<sup>355</sup> A TMD-armed Japan would be an unacceptable reality for a China with deep memories of Japanese abuse of power. The revised alliance might be exploited to simultaneously strengthen Japan's military power and encourage policies and attitudes of militarism and nationalism—a cultural coalescence that swept Japanese political ideology before World War I and led to the invasion of China on two major occasions. Chinese analysts reconsidered China's ability to counter potential military threats from the revised alliance. Chinese scientists also advised new weapons systems and multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs) to boost China's nuclear deterrence capability and counter any future Japanese TMD program.<sup>356</sup>

Chinese elites protested and challenged the ratification of the new guidelines in 1999 by highlighting Japanese past militarism in Asia and defiant military actions in the ECS. The *Guangming Daily* called the revised agreement a “bill for general [Japanese] mobilization.”<sup>357</sup> According to June Teufel Dreyer, the article identifies the alliance as a way to ensure U.S. support for Japan's “old dream of becoming a great power that had led to World War II.”<sup>358</sup> Krista E. Wiegand correlates China's various attempts at coercive anti-Japanese diplomacy with the time line of the revised defense guidelines, as presented in Table 2.<sup>359</sup> In 1996 and 1999, Beijing used diplomatic or military coercion on six occasions to oppose the U.S.-Japanese security alliance and Japan's increased military influence.<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>355</sup> Christensen, “Security Dilemma in East Asia,” 64–67, 70–73, 75–76; Garrett and Glaser, “Chinese Apprehension,” 392–95.

<sup>356</sup> Garrett and Glaser, “Chinese Apprehension,” 394; Ding, “Viewpoint: China's Concerns,” 93–100.

<sup>357</sup> Dreyer, “Sino-Japanese Relations,” 379.

<sup>358</sup> Ibid.

<sup>359</sup> Wiegand, “China's Strategy in the Senkaku/Diaoyu,” 179.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid.

Table 2. Selected Reactions to Revised U.S.-Japanese Defense Guidelines, 1996–1999

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Known Chinese government reactions against Japan</i>	<i>*Related Chinese historical grievance</i>
July 1996	Ratification of UN Convention of the Law of the Sea; joint statement on renewed defense guidelines in the U.S.-Japanese Security Alliance	Deployment of two submarines to the disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands	China's promulgation of historical territorial disputes in the ECS to protest the events.
September 1996	Joint statement on renewed defense guidelines in the U.S.-Japanese Security Alliance	Warships dispatched to waters around the islands; joint air force, navy, army maneuvers; mock blockade of island chain	China's promulgation of historical territorial disputes in the ECS to protest the events.
October 1996	Joint statement on renewed defense guidelines in the U.S.-Japanese Security Alliance	PLAN military surveillance around islands	China's promulgation of historical territorial disputes in the ECS to protest event.
November 1996	Joint statement on renewed defense guidelines in the U.S.-Japanese Security Alliance	Official claim of sovereignty before the UN	China's promulgation of historical territorial disputes in the ECS to protest event.
May 1999	Japanese bill ratifying and reaffirming renewed defense guidelines in the U.S.-Japanese Security Alliance	Warships dispatched to waters surrounding islands	China's promulgation of historical territorial disputes in the ECS to protest event.
July 1999	Japanese bill ratifying and reaffirming renewed defense guidelines in the U.S.-Japanese Security Alliance	Chinese naval drills conducted near islands	China's promulgation of historical territorial disputes in the ECS to protest event.

This table correlates Chinese government and military responses in the ECS to the revised U.S.-Japan joint security guidelines in 1996 and 1999. \*The “Related Chinese historical grievance column” and the data therein added by the thesis author. <sup>361</sup>

In all cases noted by Wiegand, China linked historical disputes in the ECS with the renewed alliance to constrain the power of its chief antagonist and reinforce Chinese interests.<sup>362</sup> Beijing’s apprehension that the alliance invited resurgent militarism spurred aggressive military posturing and protest. China’s historically based concerns neither slowed down nor altered the trajectory of Japan’s military expansion. Rather, Japan pressed forward in fulfilling its interests. However, China’s loud rehearsal of Japan’s military and cultural history gave cover to its own pursuit of expanded defense programs and national interests while also undermining Japan’s reputation. While China’s

<sup>361</sup> Adapted from Wiegand, “China’s Strategy in the Senkaku/Diaoyu,” 179.

<sup>362</sup> Wiegand, “China’s Strategy in the Senkaku/Diaoyu,” 179.

cultivation of historical grievances contributed to a rising security dilemma and Sino-Japanese tensions in this period, it was advantageous in excusing Chinese muscle flexing in the region.<sup>363</sup>

### **3. Chinese Premier Jiang Zemin Demands a Formal Written Apology, 1998**

In 1998, Chinese Premier Jiang Zemin's overplay of the history card caused a diplomatic offensive against Japan to backfire. Jiang demanded a formal written apology from Japan for wartime iniquities and a pledge to abide by China's "three no's" policy on Taiwan: "no support for two Chinas, no support for one Taiwan and one China, [and] no support for Taiwan's entry into international organizations for which statehood is a prerequisite."<sup>364</sup> In early 1998, the United States officially supported the three no's. Shortly thereafter, Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi presented to South Korean President Kim Dae Jung a formal written apology expressing deep remorse and contrition for Japan's war conduct in Korea.<sup>365</sup> This was Japan's first written apology to any country, made with the hope that South Korean leaders would respond forgivingly and begin a new chapter with Japan.<sup>366</sup> As the first Chinese head of state to visit Japan officially, Jiang was determined to receive both a similar written apology and support of the three no's.<sup>367</sup>

In contrast to their gracious exchange with South Korea, Japanese diplomats doubted that China sincerely desired to make amends or had motivation to shelve historical grievances, and were thus wary of offering a formal written apology. Agreeing to Beijing's three no's and decrying Japan's sins would elevate China's moral standing over their own, confirm Jiang's diplomatic power in the region, and be used to ensure

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<sup>363</sup> Ibid.

<sup>364</sup> Dreyer, "Sino-Japanese Relations," 378.

<sup>365</sup> Nicholas D. Kristof, "Japan Apologizes Forcefully for its Occupation of Korea," *New York Times*, October 9, 1998, [www.nytimes.com/1998/10/09/world/japan-apologizes-forcefully-for-its-occupation-of-korea.html](http://www.nytimes.com/1998/10/09/world/japan-apologizes-forcefully-for-its-occupation-of-korea.html).

<sup>366</sup> Shirk, *Fragile Superpower*, 166.

<sup>367</sup> Dreyer, "Sino-Japanese Relations," 378–379; Shirk, *Fragile Superpower*, 166–167.

that Japan's reputation remains forever blackened. Jiang, a harsh critic of Japanese historical amnesia, routinely chided Japan for failure to repent of WWII and had designed China's patriotic education campaign, which promoted strong anti-Japanese rhetoric. An article in the *New York Times* stated, "'While President Kim made it clear that he would like to settle past history,' Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Koumura told reporters, 'it was not necessarily the case' with President Jiang."<sup>368</sup> Hence, Japan refused the three-no's policy and offered only a spoken expression of remorse.<sup>369</sup>

Jiang took offense at Japan's unsatisfactory apology and resistance to the three no's as an affront to China's regional interests and spent the balance of the visit blistering Japan for its historical amnesia, attempting to browbeat a written apology from Obuchi. Japan refused to bend, repeating both its verbal apology and citing the 1972 Sino-Japanese joint statement on the status of Taiwan as sound policy.<sup>370</sup> Jiang continued his castigation, declaring "'Some Japanese, even in high positions, have distorted history and tried to gloss over Japan's invasion of China.'"<sup>371</sup> In a dinner with the Japanese emperor, Jiang criticized Japan's unwillingness to confront its guilt. In a bilateral meeting, Jiang railed for 25 minutes, demanding agreement to the three no's, criticizing Japan's convenient memory, and insisting that the term "apology" be included in a forthcoming joint Sino-Japanese communiqué.<sup>372</sup>

Although the media reported the visit a success, diplomats on both sides considered the episode a failure for China.<sup>373</sup> Japanese officials were gravely insulted and hardened their stance of refusing China a written apology. The Japanese public was disgusted by Jiang's rudeness before the emperor and his message of bitterness versus

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<sup>368</sup> Nicholas D. Kristof, "Burying the Past: War Guilt Haunts Japan," *New York Times*, November 30, 1998. [www.nytimes.com/1998/11/30/world/burying-the-past-war-guilt-haunts-japan.html](http://www.nytimes.com/1998/11/30/world/burying-the-past-war-guilt-haunts-japan.html).

<sup>369</sup> Shirk, *Fragile Superpower*, 166.

<sup>370</sup> M. Wan, *Sino-Japanese Relations*, 130.

<sup>371</sup> Kristof, "Burying the Past."

<sup>372</sup> Dreyer, "Sino-Japanese Relations," 378–379; Shirk, *Fragile Superpower*, 166–167.

<sup>373</sup> M. Wan, *Sino-Japanese Relations*, 130; Dreyer, "Sino-Japanese Relations," 378–379; Shirk, *Fragile Superpower*, 166–167.

cooperation going forward.<sup>374</sup> To avoid domestic criticism, the Chinese media barely covered the historic visit as Jiang's actions had embarrassed China.<sup>375</sup> Jiang was perceived by both his adversaries and constituents as having overplayed his hand through his obsessively punishing behavior, quashing any hope of improved Sino-Japanese relations that might have come from the visit. This case demonstrates an unsuccessful episode in which history was employed by China as a tool to coerce and control Japan, which strongly contributed to the downturn of relations during this period.<sup>376</sup>

### **C. PERIOD OF DISCORD: 2003–2006**

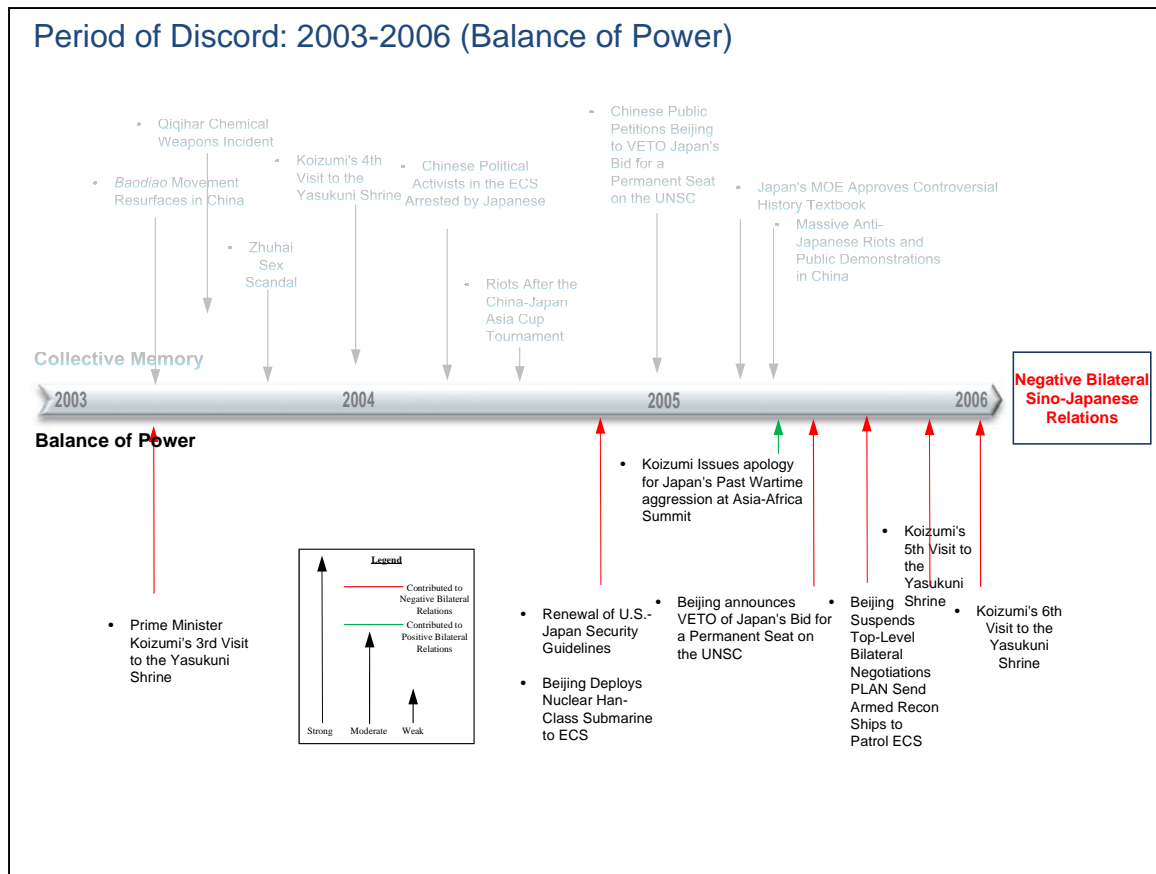
During this time, China continued to use history in attempt to contain Japan's rise while taking actions to maximize its own relative power to maintain a political advantage over Japan and secure national interests. As China became a growing exporter of manufactured goods with greater monetary affluence, it began to use its newfound economic success to increase its military capability and influence in the region. Meanwhile, nationalism and revisionist right-wing policies began to take root in Japanese politics fringing on Japan's desire to break away from its pacifist identity. History became an irreconcilable dispute that permeated nearly every aspect of bilateral diplomacy. As depicted in figure 12, during this period, China's use of history is seen mainly in its debates over sovereignty, its condemnation of Yasukuni Shrine visits by Japanese dignitaries, and the obstruction of Japan's bid for a permanent seat in the UNSC.

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<sup>374</sup> Shirk, *Fragile Superpower*, 167; Yahuda, *Two Tigers*, 35.

<sup>375</sup> Dreyer, "Sino-Japanese Relations," 379.

<sup>376</sup> Ibid., 378–379; Shirk, *Fragile Superpower*, 166–167.



Balance of power played a weaker role in explaining the downturn of relations as Beijing seemed to merely react to the surge of anti-Japanese sentiments. History-related events are depicted as weak, moderate or strong contributions (arrow sizes) to either positive (green) or negative (red) Sino-Japanese relations. The upper half of the figure depicts events most affected by collective memory (Hypothesis 1). The lower half of the figure depicts events most affected by the balance of power (Hypothesis 2). For this thesis, arrow placement (above or below) was determined by which hypothesis better represented the event.

Figure 12. Period of Discord: 2003–2006 (Balance of Power)

### 1. Renewed Diaoyu/Senkaku Island Disputes in 2004–2005 and Yasukuni Shrine Visits

In March 2004, after somewhat cooperative negotiations, the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute reemerged as a volatile issue, exacerbated by China's linkage of the dispute with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visits to the Yasukuni Shrine. Hostilities arose after China threatened to withdraw cooperation because a group of Chinese activists had been detained by Japanese officials for landing on a disputed island. The arrests galvanized the Chinese public, and Beijing demanded the activists' release

without condition, declaring that failure to do so would damage relations. Koizumi released the activists without delay; but China insisted on using the occasion to denounce Japan's pretensions to the islands. A spokesman from the vice foreign ministry asserted China's historical claims, stating, "the Diaoyu Islands have been Chinese territory from ancient times over which China has indisputable sovereignty" and Japan has "illegally detained seven Chinese citizens who landed on China's own Diaoyu Island."<sup>377</sup> From the Chinese viewpoint, Japan's claim to the islands symbolized a past humiliation of conquest and aggression in East Asia that had yet to be corrected.<sup>378</sup> To signal further resentment, Beijing cancelled negotiations concerning UNCLOS joint maritime exploration around the islands.<sup>379</sup>

China took pains to ensure that the island dispute was increasingly associated with the Yasukuni Shrine visits and Japanese nationalism. In a high-level meeting with Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi after the arrest and release of the Chinese citizens, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao protested Koizumi's visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, while referencing territorial disputes in the ECS.<sup>380</sup> He had condemned the visits on previous occasions, identifying them as causing "the main problems in China-Japan relations."<sup>381</sup> At a meeting with Kawaguchi, Wen warned that right-wing nationalism and failure to recognize Chinese sovereignty over the islands threatened the future of bilateral engagements.<sup>382</sup> An editorial in the *Daily Yomiuri* accused China of using the Yasukuni Shrine controversy as a "bargaining chip in its dealings with Japan."<sup>383</sup> In asserting that the shrine visits jeopardized bilateral negotiations, China sought leverage in the

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<sup>377</sup> Wiegand, "China's Strategy in the Senkaku/Diaoyu," 185.

<sup>378</sup> Nakano, "Threat Perception in Power Transition," 171–172.

<sup>379</sup> Wiegand, "China's Strategy in the Senkaku/Diaoyu," 185–186.

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

<sup>381</sup> Denny Roy, "China-Japan Relations: Cooperation Amidst Antagonism," Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, October 2004, Special Assessment, 9–4, [www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA627502&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA627502&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf).

<sup>382</sup> Wiegand, "China's Strategy in the Senkaku/Diaoyu," 186.

<sup>383</sup> *Ibid.*



Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute. Positive high-level diplomacy became predicated on a symbolic factor: avoidance of the Yasukuni Shrine.<sup>384</sup>

Responding in part to the escalating disputes in the ECS, Japanese SDF military exercises targeted at China, and another renewal of the U.S.-Japanese security defense guidelines in 2004, both China and Japan took military action that heightened bilateral tensions. China deployed a nuclear Han-class submarine to patrol disputed waters in the ECS and around Japan's EEZ to project China's resolve toward possible threats. China also warned Japan to temper any contemplated display of power or militaristic stance. In response, the Japanese launched P-3 aircraft, two destroyers, and antisubmarine helicopter units to intercept the submarine, and Tokyo accused Beijing of provocation. China dismissed Japan's alarm and denounced the accusations as "full of imagination" and merely an excuse to challenge Chinese "sovereignty over the Diaoyu Islands and territory in the East China Sea."<sup>385</sup> In this case, China used the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, augmented by the symbolism associated with the Yasukuni Shrine, to thumb its nose at the U.S.-Japanese alliance, and justify its deployment of the military to contain Japan's ambitions.<sup>386</sup>

In 2005, China suspended top-level bilateral negotiations on the Diaoyu/Senkaku Island dispute and arranged shows of military force, in part to protest Koizumi's visits to the Yasukuni Shrine. In the fall of 2005, the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) sent five armed reconnaissance ships to patrol island waters just weeks before negotiations on joint exploration in the ECS were to take place. Beijing also announced the establishment of a special PLAN fleet charged specifically with protecting Chinese assets in the ECS. These actions were meant to intimidate negotiators and assert Chinese

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<sup>384</sup> Ibid., 185–186.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>386</sup> Ibid., 179, 186–187.

dominance over the islands. Krista Wiegand and Reinhard Drifte argue that, among other objectives, China's flaunting of its military was to protest Koizumi's frequenting of the shrine.<sup>387</sup> Unswayed by China's performance, Koizumi visited the shrine a week later, whereupon Beijing cancelled all negotiations until such time as Koizumi agreed to quit visiting the Yasukuni Shrine. Koizumi refused, and his subsequent visits precipitated a high-level diplomatic stalemate. China had used the shrine as leverage to set the terms of Sino-Japanese negotiation and define the nature of the conflict in the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute, pushing bilateral relations to another low.<sup>388</sup>

## **2. China Vetoes Japan's Bid for a Permanent Seat at the United Nations, 2005**

Chinese elites composed an historical narrative in 2005 to support China's veto of a permanent seat for Japan on the UNSC and curb Japanese ambitions for greater influence at the regional and international level. After its brutal conduct in Asia, crushing defeat, and economic depression following WWII, Japan had worked to regain global trust and status. Its acceptance into the United Nations (UN) in 1956 allowed Japan to bolster its standing and benefit from Western-led institutions and international organizations.<sup>389</sup>

Japan used membership in the UNSC to reestablish national legitimacy after WWII, building support, prestige, and influence. In the 1980s, Japan became the second-largest contributor to the UNSC.<sup>390</sup> By 2000, Japan was funding over 20 percent of the UN budget and had become a major donor of aid to developing countries.<sup>391</sup>

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<sup>387</sup> Ibid., 188–189; Drifte, “Japan-China Confrontation,” 17.

<sup>388</sup> Wiegand argues that China links the Islands dispute to gain leverage in as a form of coercive diplomacy; whereas the thesis author argues that China uses the history issue to gain leverage. Wiegand, “China's Strategy in the Senkaku/Diaoyu,” 188–189.

<sup>389</sup> Reinhard Drifte, *Japan's Quest for Permanent Security Council Seat: A Matter of Pride or Justice*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 11–12, 15–16; Reinhard Drifte, “Japan's Quest for a Permanent Seat on the Security Council,” *Asia-Pacific Review* 5, no. 2 (1998): 89, doi: 10.1080/13439009808719981.

<sup>390</sup> Drifte, *Matter of Pride or Justice*, 39; Drifte, “Japan's Quest for a Permanent Seat,” 92.

<sup>391</sup> Drifte, “Japan's Quest for a Permanent Seat,” 100.

Nevertheless, Japan enjoyed only minor political power due to its limited membership status. In addition, as early as the 1990s, some countries began characterizing the membership of the UNSC as elitist and called for reforms to make the body more representative of all world regions, not just those of the P5.<sup>392</sup> However, in 2005, Secretary General Kofi Annan indirectly alluded to Japan<sup>393</sup> in advocating that the UNSC “increase the involvement in decision-making of those who contribute most to the United Nations financially, militarily and diplomatically.”<sup>394</sup> At that time, China contributed only 3 percent of the UN budget.<sup>395</sup> On a diplomatic visit to Tokyo in March 2005, secretary of state Condoleezza Rice affirmed U.S. support for Japan as a permanent UNSC member.<sup>396</sup> To increase international support, Japan allied with Germany, India, and Brazil to reinforce one another’s bid for a permanent seat.<sup>397</sup>

These reform proposals were an opportunity for Japan to gain a diplomatic vantage point from which to challenge China’s regional dominance. As a Japanese spokesman observed, “In the 21st Century, China will be such a big country that it can threaten Japan’s security. For Japan’s tool-less diplomacy, there is only the Security Council to check China.”<sup>398</sup> With a permanent seat, Japan would be well positioned to dampen China’s influence on Asian security and politics—a reality that would not be

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<sup>392</sup> P5 refers to the permanent 5 countries that serve as permanent members with veto power on the United Nations Security Council: United States, Great Britain, France, China, Russia (i.e., the main victors of World War II). Drifte, “Japan’s Quest for a Permanent Seat,” 89.

<sup>393</sup> Jessica C. Weiss, “Powerful Patriots: Nationalism, Diplomacy, and the Strategic Logic of Anti-Foreign Protest” (PhD diss., University of California, San Diego, 2008), 96, <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/9z19141j>.

<sup>394</sup> “Excerpt of Kofi Annan’s Report on UN Reform,” Global Policy Forum, March 21, 2005, accessed December 16, 2016, [www.globalpolicy.org/security-council/security-council-reform/41196.html?itemid=1321](http://www.globalpolicy.org/security-council/security-council-reform/41196.html?itemid=1321).

<sup>395</sup> Kent E. Calder, “China and Japan’s Simmering Rivalry,” *Foreign Affairs*, (March/April 2006), [www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2006-03-01/china-and-japans-simmering-rivalry](http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2006-03-01/china-and-japans-simmering-rivalry).

<sup>396</sup> Weiss, “Powerful Patriots,” 96.

<sup>397</sup> Philip H. Gordon, “After the UN Summit, Japan May Have to Lower its Sights,” *Brookings*, October 1, 2005, [www.brookings.edu/articles/after-the-un-summit-japan-may-have-to-lower-its-sights/](http://www.brookings.edu/articles/after-the-un-summit-japan-may-have-to-lower-its-sights/).

<sup>398</sup> Drifte, *Matter of Pride or Justice*, 107.

well taken by Beijing. China had long been suspicious of Japan's ties with the United States, and a permanent UNSC seat alongside its closest security ally might lead to the engagement of Japanese troops in UN-led operations worldwide—an intolerable advantage that could violate the Japanese constitution and jumpstart militarism.<sup>399</sup>

In its approach to this diplomatic problem, China first demurred from endorsing Japan's request for a seat, then, to build opposition, publicized Japan's atrocity denials and unrepentance. Beijing's initial arguments were that new permanent membership should be reserved for developing nations, decisions should not be rushed, and candidates should be thoroughly vetted.<sup>400</sup> China's intention of playing the history card was foreshadowed, however, in a response to Koizumi's UN address of September 2004. The Chinese foreign minister stated, "If a country wishes to play a responsible role in international affairs, it must have a clear understanding of the historical questions concerning itself."<sup>401</sup> Japan's failure to examine its past and apologize properly was clearly what China was referring to.<sup>402</sup>

China's official position was unveiled in the spring of 2005, when a petition against Japan's bid for a permanent seat reached 22.2 million signatures<sup>403</sup> and ignited massive anti-Japanese demonstrations throughout China. These public demonstrations

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<sup>399</sup> Ibid.; Drifte, "Japan's Quest for a Permanent Seat," 102–104.

<sup>400</sup> Zhang Yishan, "Statement by Ambassador Zhang Yishan on Security Council Reform at the 59th Session of the General Assembly," October 12, 2004, Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN, [www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/zzhgg/t164266.htm](http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/zzhgg/t164266.htm); Wang Guangya, "Statement by Ambassador Wang Guangya on Security Council Reform at the 59th Session of the General Assembly," Global Policy Forum, July 11, 2005, [www.globalpolicy.org/security-council/security-council-reform/50011-statement-by-ambassador-wang-guangya-on-security-council-reform-at-the-59th-session-of-the-general-assembly.html?itemid=915](http://www.globalpolicy.org/security-council/security-council-reform/50011-statement-by-ambassador-wang-guangya-on-security-council-reform-at-the-59th-session-of-the-general-assembly.html?itemid=915).

<sup>401</sup> J. Mohan Malik, "Security Council Reform: China Signals its Veto," *World Policy Journal* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 24, [www.jstor.org/stable/40209946](http://www.jstor.org/stable/40209946).

<sup>402</sup> Ibid.

<sup>403</sup> "22 million Chinese Seek to Block Japan's Bid to Join U.N. Council," *New York Times*, March 31, 2005, [www.nytimes.com/2005/03/31/international/asia/22-million-chinese-seek-to-block-japans-bid-to-join-un.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2005/03/31/international/asia/22-million-chinese-seek-to-block-japans-bid-to-join-un.html?_r=0).

were motivated primarily by Sino-Japanese history.<sup>404</sup> An official with the Chinese foreign ministry, Liu Jianchao, stated, “Japan has to take a responsible attitude toward history to build trust among the people of Asia, including China.”<sup>405</sup> The uproar in China gained international attention as Japan was condemned for its historical amnesia and inherent desires for militarism. Japan accused China, in return, of overreaction and the cynical wielding of history as a bludgeon. By April 15, 2005, Wen declared that allowing Japan a permanent UNSC seat would be internationally irresponsible, and he further stated that “only a country that respects its history, takes responsibility for history, and wins over the trust of the peoples in Asia and the world at large can take greater responsibilities in the international community.”<sup>406</sup> Foreign ministry representative Qin Gang also criticized “Japan’s erroneous attitude and actions on issues such as its history of aggression.”<sup>407</sup> A *China Daily* interview of the China ambassador to the UN, Wang Guanya, confirmed Beijing’s determination to checkmate Japan.<sup>408</sup> Implying that Japan was morally unfit, Wang stated that the granting of a permanent seat would be a “dangerous move and certainly China will oppose it.”<sup>409</sup> In a show of indignation and protest against Japan’s seared conscience, Chinese Vice Premier Wu Yi cancelled a meeting with Koizumi in Tokyo. Chinese foreign-relations scholar Shi Yinhong, of the People’s University in Beijing, commented that China’s fixation on the past was

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<sup>404</sup> Ibid.

<sup>405</sup> Joseph Kahn, “China Tries to Block Japan at UN,” *New York Times*, April 1, 2005, [www.nytimes.com/2005/04/01/world/asia/china-tries-to-block-japan-at-un.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/01/world/asia/china-tries-to-block-japan-at-un.html).

<sup>406</sup> Phillip P. Pan, “Chinese Step Up Criticism of Japan: Premier Calls Tokyo Unfit for New Role on Security Council,” *Washington Post*, April 13, 2005, [www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A47122-2005Apr12.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A47122-2005Apr12.html).

<sup>407</sup> Weiss, “Powerful Patriots,” 108.

<sup>408</sup> “China Opposes UNSC Enlargement with Japan,” *China Daily*, June 3, 2005, [www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-06/03/content\\_448242.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-06/03/content_448242.htm).

<sup>409</sup> Ibid.

maintained to ensure its political dominance in Asia.<sup>410</sup> Shi declared that “the moral issue is China’s trump card over Japan. . . . China is now playing that card.”<sup>411</sup> Historical grievances drove Beijing’s arguments as its opposition to a permanent seat became explicit. Once again, Chinese outrage over Japan’s past actions gave shape and weight to China’s otherwise weak objections to a seat for Japan and discouraged criticism of its intended veto.<sup>412</sup>

Japan struggled to maintain face under China’s blistering contempt. Responding to Chinese protests and threats, Koizumi apologized for Japan’s wartime conduct and pledged that his country would continue to promote international peace.<sup>413</sup> Diplomat Yochi Funibashi complained that China’s promulgation of history is something that can never be forgotten and “leaves China looking like it has moral superiority over Japan”<sup>414</sup>—a key advantage in the game of political dominance in Asia.

Japan’s defense made little difference, however, and support dwindled. UN Chief of Staff Malloch Brown averred that all nations seeking a permanent seat on the UNSC “need to listen to their regions and give their regions assurance that they are not going to use their membership to settle scores within the region.”<sup>415</sup> Owing in part to international criticism based on China’s invocation of Sino-Japanese history and disputes, the United States withdrew its support for Japan’s bid.<sup>416</sup> On July 14, 2005, the U.S. ambassador to the UN, Tahir-Kheli, announced that “the U.S. does not think any proposal to expand the

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<sup>410</sup> Joseph Kahn, “China is Pushing and Scripting Anti-Japanese Protests,” *New York Times*, April 15, 2005, [www.nytimes.com/2005/04/15/world/asia/china-is-pushing-and-scripting-antijapanese-protests.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/15/world/asia/china-is-pushing-and-scripting-antijapanese-protests.html).

<sup>411</sup> Ibid.

<sup>412</sup> Weiss, “Powerful Patriots,” 98–116.

<sup>413</sup> “Japan’s Koizumi Apologizes for World War II,” NBC News, April 22, 2005, [www.nbcnews.com/id/7594240/ns/world\\_news/t/japans-koizumi-apologizes-world-war-ii/#.WFSFDFMrKUK](http://www.nbcnews.com/id/7594240/ns/world_news/t/japans-koizumi-apologizes-world-war-ii/#.WFSFDFMrKUK).

<sup>414</sup> Christian Caryl, “A Very Lonely Japan,” *Asia-Pacific Journal* 3, Issue 10, no. 0 (October 12, 2005): 4, <http://apjpf.org/-Christian-Caryl/1891/article.html>.

<sup>415</sup> Weiss, “Powerful Patriots,” 109–110.

<sup>416</sup> Ibid., 116.

Security Council—including one based on our own ideas—should be voted upon at this stage.”<sup>417</sup> By August 2005, the United States and China opposed any additional reforms to UNSC membership, thus sealing Japan’s future in the UNSC.<sup>418</sup> Kent Calder observed that “China is emerging as a skilled diplomatic player that can use the history card more effectively to marginalize Japan than previously due to its growing political and economic clout.”<sup>419</sup> China’s exploitation of historical grievances and fears, coupled with its implicit support of rampant domestic anti-Japanese protests, humiliated Japan and blocked access to greater power and prestige—a clear realpolitik victory that contained Japan’s power but came at the expense of cooperative bilateral relations.

#### **D. PERIOD OF DISCORD: 2010– 2016**

While China’s power has been climbing since the normalization of bilateral relations in 1972, this period of conflict reflects a more dramatic Sino-Japanese power transition in the region and brings relations between Beijing and Tokyo to another significant low. During this time, China’s growing economic and military power, coupled with its aggressive actions in the East and South China Seas, has alarmed neighboring countries. By 2015, China was the number one exporter of manufactured goods, controlled over 20 percent of the world’s GDP, and surpassed Japan as the second-largest economy (based on nominal GDP) in the world.<sup>420</sup> Meanwhile, China increased its military capabilities to match its economic power. New maritime assets included a fleet

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<sup>417</sup> Ibid.

<sup>418</sup> Ibid.

<sup>419</sup> Calder, “China and Japan’s Simmering Rivalry.”

<sup>420</sup> Hosaka, “China Surpasses Japan”; Morrison, *China’s Economic Rise*, 1, 9–11.

of fishing-enforcement ships, modern surveillance and patrol ships, and China's first aircraft carrier, the *Liaoning*.<sup>421</sup> Advanced air assets were acquired, including the latest Chengdu J-20 supersonic fighter jet,<sup>422</sup> Russian-designed *Sukhoi* Su-35 Flanker-E jet fighters,<sup>423</sup> and the *Gyr Falcon* FC-31 stealth fighter.<sup>424</sup> In 2016, the *New York Times* reported China's testing of a new small-yield nuclear weapon, or "hypersonic glide vehicle," that could potentially defeat any existing missile defense.<sup>425</sup> Not coincidentally, tensions over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands skyrocketed, with massive public protests in China, daily incursions of Chinese ships and planes into disputed Japanese territorial waters, and the declaration of a Chinese ADIZ. With a more advanced and capable military to back up its plans for the ECS, China threatened Japan's security in the region.

Since 2010, as shown in Figure 13, disputes in the ECS have become a focal point in Sino-Japanese relations.<sup>426</sup> The three key phenomena discussed in this section are (1) Japan's nationalization of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands in 2012, (2) China's reaction to the leadership of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2013, and (3) continuing issues in 2014–

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<sup>421</sup> During this time, the *Liaoning* aircraft carrier was originally purchased from Russia and refitted for sea trials and exercises in Chinese waters. Its first deployment in the Pacific Ocean and potentially in the South China Sea took place on December 26, 2016. Brad Lendon, "China's Aircraft Carrier Prowling Pacific, Sending a Message," CNN, December 27, 2016, [www.cnn.com/2016/12/27/asia/china-aircraft-carrier-pacific/](http://www.cnn.com/2016/12/27/asia/china-aircraft-carrier-pacific/).

<sup>422</sup> Brad Lendon, "China's New J-20 Stealth Fighter Screams on to Scene," CCN, November 1, 2016, [www.cnn.com/2016/11/01/asia/china-j-20-stealth-fighter-introduction/](http://www.cnn.com/2016/11/01/asia/china-j-20-stealth-fighter-introduction/).

<sup>423</sup> Dave Majumdar, "Get Ready, America: Russia's Lethal Su-35 Fighter is Now Part of China's Air Force," *National Interest*, December 28, 2016, <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/get-ready-america-russias-lethal-su-35-fighter-now-part-18881>.

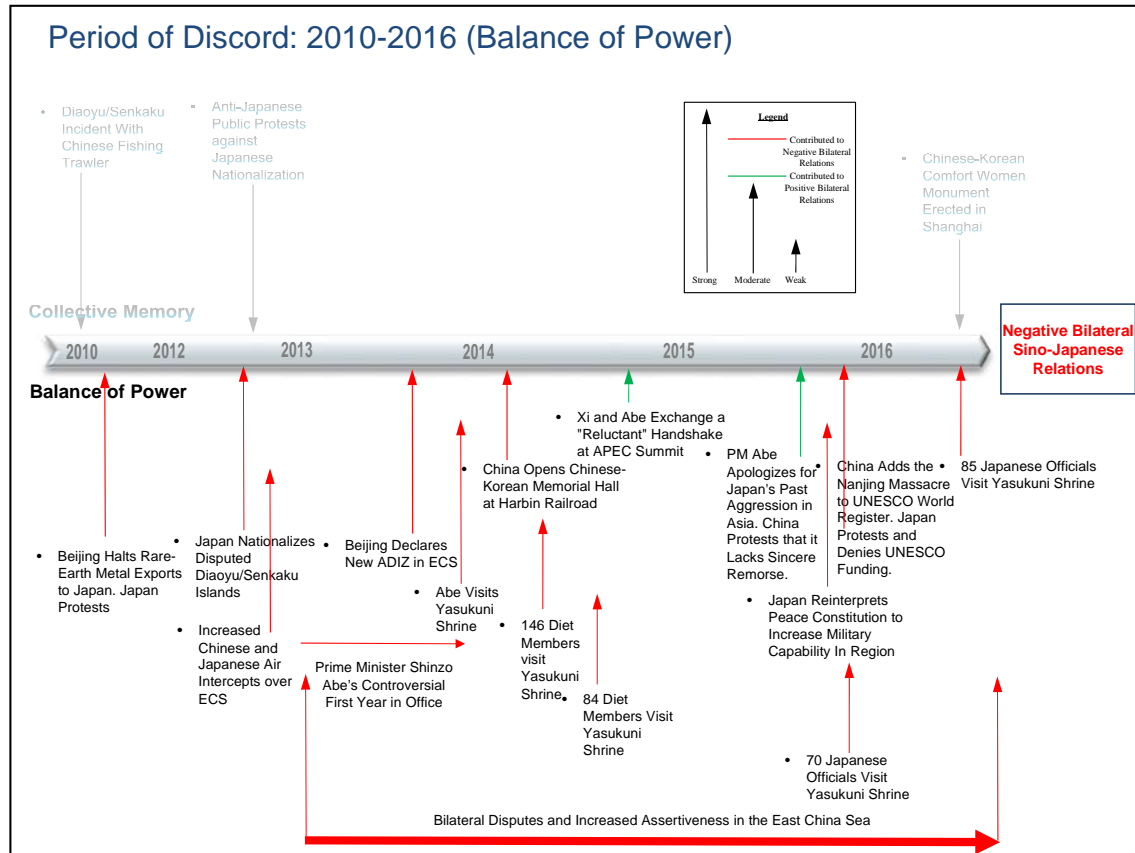
<sup>424</sup> Jack Phillips, "Chinese Military Tests New FC-31 Stealth Fighter Plane," *The Epoch Times*, December 28, 2016, [www.theepochtimes.com/n3/2204162-chinese-military-tests-new-fc-31-stealth-fighter-plane/](http://www.theepochtimes.com/n3/2204162-chinese-military-tests-new-fc-31-stealth-fighter-plane/).

<sup>425</sup> William J. Broad and David E. Sanger, "Race for Latest Class of Nuclear Arms Threatens to Revive Cold War," *New York Times*, April 16, 2016, [www.nytimes.com/2016/04/17/science/atom-bomb-nuclear-weapons-hgv-arms-race-russia-china.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/17/science/atom-bomb-nuclear-weapons-hgv-arms-race-russia-china.html?_r=0).

<sup>426</sup> In 2010, the arrest of a Chinese fishing trawler Captain who supposedly rammed two Japanese Coast Guard ships spurred domestic protests in China and became a major international incident because both sides were unwilling to compromise. Eventually, Japan released the captain as video footage was leaked on U-Tube clearly showing that the captain's actions were intentional. After this incident, both China and Japan put the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute and ECS operations in the forefront of bilateral relations. Since 2010, China seems to have permanently linked the island disputes to historical disputes. For the purpose of this thesis, this incident will only be mentioned briefly in Chapter II. Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 233–235.



2016: the Yasukuni Shrine, international recognition of China's historical grievances, and military escalation in the ECS.



Sino-Japanese relations reached another low beginning with events in the ECS in 2010 and escalating in 2012 with Japan's nationalization of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands and continued its trajectory of discord. Balance of power played a very strong role in explaining the downturn of bilateral relations during this time. History-related events are depicted as weak, moderate or strong contributions (arrow sizes) to either positive (green) or negative (red) Sino-Japanese relations. The upper half of the figure depicts events most affected by collective memory (Hypothesis 1). The lower half of the figure depicts events most affected by the balance of power (Hypothesis 2). For this thesis, arrow placement (above or below) was determined by which hypothesis better represented the event.

Figure 13. Period of Discord: 2010–2016 (Balance of Power)

## 1. Japan's Nationalization of the Disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, 2012

In 2012, Japan's nationalization of the disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands hastened Chinese use of historical grievances to justify assertive actions in the ECS. On September

11, 2012, Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda announced that his government had purchased three of the five Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands for 2.05 billion yen.<sup>427</sup> This news was met with massive anti-Japanese protests in China, accusations of Japanese remilitarism in Asia, and escalated Chinese maritime activity in the ECS.<sup>428</sup> The purchase was meant to ease hostilities over the disputed territory by preventing Tokyo governor Ishihara from purchasing the islands for development—which would have upset the status quo of Japanese governmental control and bilateralism vis-a-vis China.<sup>429</sup> The plan backfired, however; China vociferously objected to the purchase and rallied domestic criticism, precipitating a critical deterioration in bilateral relations and contributing to the downfall of Noda’s government.<sup>430</sup>

On the domestic front, the CCP acquiesced to massive protests and riots that began almost immediately following the announcement that Japan had nationalized the islands. On September 18, the anniversary of the Mukden Incident marking Japan’s invasion of China, hundreds of demonstrations broke out and a call to boycott Japanese goods gained traction on the Internet. The tumult drew international headlines and criticism to Noda’s administration as Chinese officials blamed the unrest on Japan’s illegal assertions and invalid claims and its determined inability to face history. Rehearsing a familiar refrain, the CCP capitalized on widespread public reaction to condemn historical offenses allegedly repeated in the present.<sup>431</sup>

In concert with the riots, Beijing officials dramatized Japan’s hidden right-wing nationalistic agenda and aggressive military deception of the international community. At a UN general assembly meeting, Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi protested the purchase by reciting China’s ancient claim to the islands and its wrongful seizure after the First Sino-Japanese War in the Treaty of Shimonoseki. A spokesman from the Chinese foreign

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<sup>427</sup> Kiyoshi Takenaka, “Japan Buys Disputed Islands.”

<sup>428</sup> Reilly, “Wave to Worry About?” 208–212.

<sup>429</sup> Genba, “Japan-China Relations at a Crossroads.”

<sup>430</sup> Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 236–239, 240–241.

<sup>431</sup> Wallace and Weiss, “Political Geography,” 405–407; Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 236–239; Reilly, “Wave to Worry About?” 208–210.

ministry, Qin Gang, identified Japanese claims to the islands as evidence of revived nationalism and right-wing militaristic ambitions of controlling Chinese territory as in the early 20th century. Qin warned Japan to “stop all acts that undermine China’s territorial sovereignty instead of making repeated mistakes and deceiving the whole world.”<sup>432</sup> Qin referred to Japan’s infringements on other Asian countries and its militaristic agenda, cloaked by its so-called commitment to peace. Noda clarified his intentions and called for a cooperative resolution to the dispute. Chinese Foreign Minister Yang rejected Noda’s explanation, reasserted Chinese sovereignty, and lambasted Japan for failing to return the islands after WWII. Yang, further accused Japan of overthrowing the postwar status quo and once again disrupting regional peace. Noda argued that since the end of the war, Japan had been a peaceable nation with no militaristic agenda. However, Noda inflamed hostilities by reasserting that no dispute existed because Japanese sovereignty over the islands rested on the UNCLOS policies of *terra nullis* and international law. China accused Japan of resurrecting its past militarism under the deceit of international law to strengthen its argument, denounced Japan’s claims in the ECS, and forced Japan to submit to the existence of a territorial disputes between the countries. However, Japan only hardened its position, forcing China to escalate its presence in the ECS to strengthen its claims.<sup>433</sup>

To challenge Japan’s claim to unilateral administrative control in the surrounding waters, China stood by its version of history and reinforced its posture by raising its military presence in the area. Maritime patrols and Chinese marine surveillance (CMS) aircraft, government fishery ships, and PLAN warships conducting exercises or loitering around the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands became a norm in the region. Within three months of the purchase, Chinese ships had entered Japanese territorial waters 17 times.<sup>434</sup> On December 13, 2012, as China commemorated the 75th anniversary of the Nanjing Massacre, a maritime surveillance aircraft entered Japanese airspace over the islands, the

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<sup>432</sup> Przystup, “Fuggetaboutit!”

<sup>433</sup> Ibid.

<sup>434</sup> Ibid.

first direct intrusion over the islands.<sup>435</sup> The JASDF “scrambled eight F-15 fighter jets” to intercept the Chinese craft.<sup>436</sup> In reply, Beijing decried Japanese incursions into Chinese territorial waters and airspace and asserted that routine patrols by CMS aircraft were “completely normal.”<sup>437</sup> In this case, to support national interests and diminish Japanese influence in the ECS, China used the history issue to break Japanese administrative control over the islands and justify increased maritime activity.<sup>438</sup>

Adding to the diplomatic chaos was a political transition viewed as disturbing by China. On Japan’s domestic home front, the public had grown weary of Japan’s stagnating economy along with Noda’s crippling taxation legislation, the government’s handling of the triple disaster, and Noda’s party’s inability to productively unite divided political factions.<sup>439</sup> In addition, the people of Japan held Noda largely to blame for mishandling the territorial disputes of 2012 and doubted his government’s competency to manage diplomacy with China.<sup>440</sup> Election polls predicted a win for Shinzo Abe—a right-wing nationalist and ardent supporter of the Yasukuni Shrine—as prime minister. Noda’s fall in popularity and eventual resignation reflected the degree to which Japanese domestic politics are heavily influenced by China’s use of history and the islands disputes.

In response to the change in prime ministers, on election day China dispatched its largest and newly updated fisheries law enforcement command ship to conduct operations within Japanese waters around the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, signaling

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<sup>435</sup> Kiyoshi Takenaka, “Japan Scrambles Jets as Chinese Plane Flies Over Disputed Isles,” *Reuters*, December 13, 2012, [www.reuters.com/article/us-china-japan-scramble-idUSBRE8BC07920121213](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-japan-scramble-idUSBRE8BC07920121213); Przystup, “Fuggetaboutit!”

<sup>436</sup> Ibid.

<sup>437</sup> Przystup, “Fuggetaboutit!”

<sup>438</sup> Ibid.

<sup>439</sup> Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 240.

<sup>440</sup> “Profile: Yoshihiko Noda,” BBC News, December 14, 2012, [www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-14706109](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-14706109); Dreyer, *Middle Kingdom*, 240; Kenneth Pletcher, “Noda Yoshihiko: Prime Minister of Japan,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, last updated November 27, 2016, [www.britannica.com/biography/Noda-Yoshihiko](http://www.britannica.com/biography/Noda-Yoshihiko).

readiness to confront Abe's government.<sup>441</sup> A spokesman from the Chinese foreign ministry characterized increased maritime and air patrols around the islands as necessary to "defend national territorial sovereignty as well as [China's] maritime rights and interests."<sup>442</sup> He also stated that the islands "have been China's inherent territory since ancient times."<sup>443</sup> Thus, the ECS became the battlefield where the Chinese government used history to challenge the right-wing policies of the new Japanese administration.<sup>444</sup>

In this period, China invoked historical injustices to neutralize Japanese actions in the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, support advantageous public protests, and justify increased military aggression in the ECS. To a degree, the Chinese elites hardened their rhetoric against Japan and took more aggressive actions in the ECS to show support for their domestic constituents. The Chinese elites also used the rise of anti-Japanese public opinion to strengthen their own protests against Japan and justify an accelerated military agenda to challenge Japanese sovereignty in the ECS. However, this strategy did little to gain concessions from Japan or influence Japanese policies to China's advantage. Rather, it locked down Japan's position, escalated tensions, increased the risk of military confrontation, and garnered Japanese domestic support for hawkish leadership. China's deployment of history led only to increased conflict and a downward spiral of action and reaction.

## **2. China versus Abe in the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands Dispute, 2013**

In 2013, China's fears of an emergent nationalistic, militaristic Japan seemed fulfilled with the election of Shinzo Abe, an ardent supporter of the War-Bereaved

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<sup>441</sup> Przysup, "Fuggetaboutit!"

<sup>442</sup> Ibid.

<sup>443</sup> Ibid.

<sup>444</sup> Ibid.

Families Association<sup>445</sup> and an outspoken nationalist. China immediately took the offensive through rhetoric and military activity. Within his first month of office, Abe increased Japan's defense budget to over 4.6804 trillion yen to support defense measures in the ECS—the first increase in 11 years.<sup>446</sup> In February 2013, Abe told the *Washington Post* that China's patriotic education campaign had biased the Chinese public by mischaracterizing Japanese actions in WWII and had become a primary cause of bilateral tensions.<sup>447</sup> In March, Abe denounced the Tokyo War Tribunals of 1945 as unfair and an example of "victor's justice."<sup>448</sup> In April, Abe defended the Yasukuni Shrine, encouraging the largest attendance in eight years of Japanese officials at the shrine's spring festival. The same month, Abe announced that his administration would no longer honor the 1995 Murayama apology for Japan's wartime conduct in Asia and proclaimed that a new statement would be finalized for the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII.

Intentionally or not, Abe deeply affronted the Chinese when a photo was released of him posing with a smile and thumbs-up in a Japanese military jet with "731" emblazoned on the side—the number of an Imperial Japanese unit guilty of horrendous biological and chemical experimentation on thousands of Chinese civilians during the war.<sup>449</sup> In addition, Abe called for the legal reinterpretation or revision of Japan's peace constitution to allow collective self-defense roles for Japan's military. Abe confirmed Japan's unwavering defense of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands and EEZ in the ECS under the rubric of "proactive pacifism" and accused China of using force to disrupt the settled

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<sup>445</sup> Japan's War-Bereaved Families Association originated to support the families with veterans and deceased relatives who fought in World War II. It is a well-known right-wing political NGO that advocates for the implicit support of the Yasukuni Shrine, support to the families who suffered losses of family members during the war, and excavation projects to repatriate the remains of those lost on foreign lands. Eric Johnston, "Japan's Veterans Bemoan Lack of U.S.-Style Respect," *Japan Times*, August 9, 2005, [www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2005/08/09/national/japans-veterans-bemoan-lack-of-u-s-style-respect/#.WKto4hIrL-Y](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2005/08/09/national/japans-veterans-bemoan-lack-of-u-s-style-respect/#.WKto4hIrL-Y); This website received permission to post this article from *East Asia Forum*. "Religion's Place in Japan's Liberal Democratic Party," *Economy Watch*, December 3, 2014, [www.economywatch.com/features/Religions-Place-in-Japans-Liberal-Democratic-Party.12-03-14.html](http://www.economywatch.com/features/Religions-Place-in-Japans-Liberal-Democratic-Party.12-03-14.html).

<sup>446</sup> Przystup, "Treading Troubled Waters."

<sup>447</sup> Ibid.

<sup>448</sup> Ibid.

<sup>449</sup> Mark Spitzer, "Sorry, But Japan Still Can't Get the War Right," *Time*, May 20, 2013, <http://nation.time.com/2013/05/20/sorry-but-japan-still-cant-get-the-war-right/>.

issue of Japanese administrative control.<sup>450</sup> By the end of the year, Abe formally visited the Yasukuni Shrine—the first prime-ministerial visit since Koizumi’s in 2006. All these actions played to China’s fears.<sup>451</sup>

Abe’s aggressive right-wing agenda in his first year led to sharp retaliatory criticism of Japan’s delusional understanding of its past. Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman Hong Lei criticized Abe’s remarks on history, stating, “it is rare that a country’s leader brazenly distorts facts, attacks its neighbor, and instigates antagonism between regional countries.”<sup>452</sup> Responding to Abe’s statement condemning Chinese use of force in the ECS, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying challenged Abe to “give up . . . [the] illusion” and “face squarely history and reality.”<sup>453</sup> China defended the findings of the postwar military tribunal and accused Japan of revisionism: “There is always a force in Japan that is unwilling to accept its defeat” and desires to “challenge the postwar international order.”<sup>454</sup> In response to alarming content in Japan’s *National Institute for Defense Studies East Asian Strategic Review*,<sup>455</sup> China called for Japan to stop deceiving the world about why it was expanding its military and “come clean about its own defense policy.”<sup>456</sup>

On the anniversary of the Mukden incident, Beijing denounced Japan’s presumed nationalist agenda and accused Japan of “creating and exaggerating conflicts deliberately as an excuse to arms expansion and modification of its military strategy . . . to find an excuse to amend its constitution, build up its military strength and adjust its military

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<sup>450</sup> Przystup, “Can We Talk?”

<sup>451</sup> Przystup, “Treading Troubled Waters”; Przystup, “Can We Talk?”

<sup>452</sup> Przystup, “Treading Troubled Waters.”

<sup>453</sup> Ibid.

<sup>454</sup> Ibid.

<sup>455</sup> National Institute for Defense Studies, *East Asian Strategic Review 2013*, (Tokyo, Japan: Japan Times, 2013), [www.nids.mod.go.jp/english/publication/east-asian/e2013.html](http://www.nids.mod.go.jp/english/publication/east-asian/e2013.html); Przystup, “Treading Troubled Waters.”

<sup>456</sup> Przystup, “Treading Troubled Waters.”

policies.”<sup>457</sup> A foreign ministry official warned, “given all negative moves taken by Japan on historical issues, Asian countries and the international community, including China, cannot but pay high attention and stay on high alert.”<sup>458</sup> China again denounced the Yasukuni Shrine and stated that “only when the Japanese government faces history with the right attitude and can profoundly reflect on history will it march towards the future and develop a friendly and cooperative relationship with its neighboring countries and China.”<sup>459</sup> At a G-20 summit in September 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping called for Abe to abandon his revisionist agenda and correct Japan’s view of wartime and island history.<sup>460</sup> As Abe refused to recant, the Chinese increased pressure, alleging nationalistic policies, historical amnesia, and a Japan’s hidden agenda of imperialism in East Asia. Hence both sides hardened their stances and neither side seemed willing to compromise. The more China challenged Japan’s historical amnesia, the more Abe and his administration retaliated with nationalistic and revisionist policies. China’s fears of rising Japanese power and regional influence with the Abe administration prompted Beijing to highlight historical grievances at nearly every opportunity in an attempt to contain Japanese ambitions for power. However, during Abe’s first year, China’s use of history was less effective in manipulating Japanese policies. Nonetheless, during this time China was able to capitalize on Japan’s historical amnesia to justify its own defense increases to support national interests in the ECS and challenge Japanese power.<sup>461</sup>

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<sup>457</sup> Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman, Hong Lei as quoted by James J. Przystup. Przystup, “Can We Talk?”

<sup>458</sup> Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman, Hong Lei as quoted by James J. Przystup. Ibid.

<sup>459</sup> Przystup, “Treading Troubled Waters.”

<sup>460</sup> Przystup, “Can We Talk?”

<sup>461</sup> Przystup, “Treading Troubled Waters”; Przystup, “Can We Talk?”



During Abe's inaugural year, China strengthened its security measures and surged sea and air incursions into Japanese waters and airspace to flout Japan's territorial claims in the ECS. China also announced a 10.7 percent increase in its defense budget—the third consecutive year the budget was increased by double digits.<sup>462</sup> In January 2013, China announced plans for a fleet of ships to patrol ECS waters and effectively attrite Japanese administrative control over the Diaoyu/Senkaku area.<sup>463</sup> The Japanese foreign ministry reported that Chinese incursions into Japanese airspace doubled from 156 in 2011 to 306 in 2012.<sup>464</sup> By April 2013, Chinese maritime or air incursions in primary or contiguous Japanese waters and airspace in the ECS were nearly continuous. On one occasion, a Japanese destroyer reported that a Chinese PLAN frigate had locked its radar on a JMSDF helicopter and destroyer on patrol. Although a Chinese officer admitted to the lock-ons, Beijing accused Japan of fabricating the incident as a ploy to divert attention from its own militaristic agenda. Again, China used the familiar refrain of historical disputes and claims of Japan's reversion to military aggression and historical amnesia to justify defense modernization projects for amplified incursions in the ECS and to break Japanese control over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands.<sup>465</sup>

Tensions in the ECS reached an apex in November 2013 when China declared an active ADIZ that overlapped Japanese-controlled areas, including the Diaoyu/Senkaku chain. Figure 14 depicts the overlapping EEZ boundaries in the ECS. Japan instantly objected and urged all Japanese commercial aircraft to continue normal navigation procedures and disregard China's invalid ADIZ restrictions. The Chinese foreign

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<sup>462</sup> Przystup, "Treading Troubled Waters."

<sup>463</sup> Ibid.

<sup>464</sup> Ibid.

<sup>465</sup> Ibid.

ministry retorted by asserting China's right to the ADIZ and accusing Japan of frustrating bilateral cooperation by "not fac[ing] up to history and reality and fail[ing] to adopt correct approaches on relevant issues."<sup>466</sup> After a month of tension, potential conflict, and international uproar over the safety of transiting aircraft,<sup>467</sup> the parties signed an agreement to allow the safe passage of all aircraft. Despite the barrage of complaints regarding wartime atrocities, rewriting of history, illegal takings, and increasing aggression, Japan did not budge on its sovereignty claims in the ECS. Rather, China's accusations and insistence on drawing equivalencies between past and present actions nearly led to open military conflict and international criticism. In this instance, China overplayed its history card, and instead of garnering support for its historical claims in the ECS, it brought international criticism and forced Beijing to back down from its aggressive stance to compromise with Japan. In addition, Japan's strong response in challenging the ADIZ also garnered domestic support for Abe's nationalistic policies against China. A December 2013 survey from the *Sankei Shimbun* reported that 87 percent of the respondents perceived China's actions in the ECS as "threatening" to Japan.<sup>468</sup> In this case, China's coercive use of history to justify an ADIZ to defend national interests in the ECS failed to break Japan's control in the ECS and obviously contributed to bilateral tensions during this period.<sup>469</sup>

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<sup>466</sup> Przystup, "Can We Talk?"

<sup>467</sup> Of note, many civilian aircraft air routes travel through China's proclaimed ADIZ, which brought alarm to many international airlines that transit that airspace. In addition, neighboring Asian countries, the United States, and other militaries use FAA-approved airways to file flight plans that transit through this proclaimed ADIZ. If the ADIZ is enforced, China could create international dilemmas not just with Japan but also with neighboring Asian countries and the United States.

<sup>468</sup> Przystup, "Can We Talk?"

<sup>469</sup> Ibid.



This figure shows the disputed ADIZs and EEZs and the location of the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands in the ECS. China still proclaims this ADIZ; however, as of January 2017, it has not actively enforced it.

Figure 14. China's and Japan's Overlapping ADIZs and EEZs in the ECS.<sup>470</sup>

### 3. Yasukuni, Historical Promulgation at the International Level, and Engagements in the ECS, 2014–2016

Historical differences continued with little resolve under the leadership of both Shinzo Abe and Xi Jinping in similar patterns in the years following 2013. The next section explores the main history-related flashpoints that contributed to the downturn of bilateral relations from 2014 to 2016: China's continual protest of the Yasukuni Shrine, China's promulgation of Japan's historical aggression to the international community, and the escalation of maritime and air conflicts in the ECS.

<sup>470</sup> "Viewpoints: China Air Zone Tensions," BBC News, November 28, 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-25116119>.

a. *Yasukuni Shrine Continued, 2014-2016*

The Chinese government's reaction to Abe's shrine visit in 2013 continued to overshadow bilateral relations. The foreign ministry claimed that Abe's actions represented a "blatant whitewash and denial of Japan's history of aggression and colonial rule [that] indicate[s] that Japan attempts to negate the outcome of World War II and the postwar international order."<sup>471</sup> A spokesman from the Chinese foreign ministry encouraged Abe to refrain from further pilgrimages and claimed that Abe had "severely damaged the political foundations of China-Japan relations."<sup>472</sup> A January 2014 editorial in the *Telegraph* by the Chinese ambassador to Great Britain alluded to *Harry Potter*, claiming that the revival of Japan's militaristic nature was like the return of Voldemort to Asia and the shrine a dark and sacred *horcrux*, a source of evil power to revive Japan's militaristic past.<sup>473</sup> Japan's ambassador to Great Britain responded by denying any evidence of militarism and called China the Voldemort for refusing talks and inciting tensions in the region.<sup>474</sup> Cooperative relations were suffering from China's belaboring of the Yasukuni Shrine.

Partly in punishment for his visits, Beijing refused Abe's requests to meet with Xi Jinping for discussions. Bilateral negotiations over ECS disputes resumed intermittently only after Abe stopped visiting the shrine. After a period of diplomatic isolation, Xi and Abe met briefly to exchange an awkward and reluctant handshake at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in November 2014,<sup>475</sup> the first high-level

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<sup>471</sup> Przysup, "Past as Prologue."

<sup>472</sup> Ibid.

<sup>473</sup> Voldemort is the evil character in the Harry Potter series who possesses a number of evil charms or *horcruxes* that are the basis of his evil power and that would allow him to take over the world in darkness. The Harry Potter series was created and written by J. K. Rowling. Catherine A. Traywick and Liz Carter, "Is Shinzo Abe the Voldemort of Asia?" *Foreign Policy*, January 3, 2014, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/01/03/is-shinzo-abe-the-voldemort-of-asia/>; Liu Xiaoming, "Liu Xiaoming: China and Britain Won the War Together," *Telegraph*, January 1, 2014, [www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/10546442/Liu-Xiaoming-China-and-Britain-won-the-war-together.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/10546442/Liu-Xiaoming-China-and-Britain-won-the-war-together.html).

<sup>474</sup> Justin McCurry, "Japan Hits Back at China over Voldemort Comparisons," *Diplomat*, January 6, 2014, [www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/06/japan-china-voldemort-harry-potter](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/06/japan-china-voldemort-harry-potter).

<sup>475</sup> Jane Perlez, "For China and Japan, a New Effort to Improve Relations Produces a Chilly Scene," *New York Times*, November 10, 2014, [www.nytimes.com/2014/11/11/world/asia/leaders-of-china-and-japan-hold-long-awaited-meeting.html?partner=rssnyt&emc=rss&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/11/world/asia/leaders-of-china-and-japan-hold-long-awaited-meeting.html?partner=rssnyt&emc=rss&_r=0).

meeting in two and a half years.<sup>476</sup> The leaders agreed to recognize each other's position and open discussions regarding their differences over history. In this case, China successfully used history to control high-level diplomacy and prevent Japanese Prime Minister Abe from honoring an alleged monument of oppression.<sup>477</sup>

While Abe may have stopped attending the shrine, other right-wing officials and cabinet members did not. Over 146 diet members attended the Yasukuni Shrine spring festival in April 2014, while Abe only sent an official *sakaki* offering.<sup>478</sup> On August 15, 2014, the anniversary of the end of WWII, 84 diet members visited the shrine and Abe again sent a *sakaki* offering.<sup>479</sup> In October 2015, 70 officials attended the fall festival; again, Abe sent an offering.<sup>480</sup> In May and December 2015, Japan's first lady, Akie Abe, visited the shrine, partly as a gesture to appease Abe's conservative constituents.<sup>481</sup> On October 18, 2016, China protested a visit by 85 Japanese officials during the fall festival and denounced Abe's recent *sakaki* offerings.<sup>482</sup> Although the Chinese made it impolitic

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<sup>476</sup> "Awkward Looks Reveal Hard Work to Come as Abe Finally Meets Xi," *Japan Times*, November 11, 2014, [www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/11/11/national/politics-diplomacy/awkward-looks-reveal-hard-work-come-abe-finally-meets-xi/#.WHQDI7YrKCQ](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/11/11/national/politics-diplomacy/awkward-looks-reveal-hard-work-come-abe-finally-meets-xi/#.WHQDI7YrKCQ).

<sup>477</sup> As of January 2017, Prime Minister Abe has yet to revisit the Yasukuni Shrine. He has only sent *sakaki* branch offerings to the Shrine.

<sup>478</sup> The *sakaki* tree or scientific name of *Cleyera japonica* is considered a sacred or holy evergreen tree that symbolizes loyalty and stability in the Shinto religion. A *sakaki* offering usually consists of a bouquet of branches, and it is considered a respectful offering to the *Kami* or divine spirits of the shrine; Przystup, "Past as Prologue."

<sup>479</sup> James J. Przystup, "Japan-China Relations: Searching for a Summit," *Center for Strategic and International Studies: Comparative Connections* 16, no. 2 (September 2014), [www.csis.org/programs/pacific-forum-csis/publications/comparative-connections/volume-16-2014/vol-16-no-2](http://www.csis.org/programs/pacific-forum-csis/publications/comparative-connections/volume-16-2014/vol-16-no-2).

<sup>480</sup> Jonathan Soble, "Shinzo Abe Stays Away as Japanese Lawmakers Visit Contentious Yasukuni Shrine," *New York Times*, October 20, 2015, [www.nytimes.com/2015/10/21/world/asia/japan-yasukuni-shrine-shinzo-abe.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/21/world/asia/japan-yasukuni-shrine-shinzo-abe.html).

<sup>481</sup> "Abe's Wife Visits Yasukuni," *Japan Times*, December 29, 2015, [www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/12/29/national/politics-diplomacy/abes-wife-visits-war-linked-yasukuni-shrine/#.WG\\_lcrYrL-Y](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/12/29/national/politics-diplomacy/abes-wife-visits-war-linked-yasukuni-shrine/#.WG_lcrYrL-Y).

<sup>482</sup> "85 Lawmakers Visit Yasukuni Shrine in Annual Tokyo Ritual," *Asahi Shimbun*, October 18, 2016, [www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201610180045.html](http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201610180045.html); "Dozens of Japan Lawmakers Visit Controversial War Shrine," *Channel News Asia*, October 18, 2016, [www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/dozens-of-japan-lawmakers-visit-controversial-war-shrine/3214374.html](http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/dozens-of-japan-lawmakers-visit-controversial-war-shrine/3214374.html).

for Abe to visit the shrine and they won his lip service, the *sakaki* offerings and unabated visits of other officials continued to provoke Beijing.

***b. Justifying Historical Disputes at the International Level, 2014–2016***

China sought the help of other nations to corroborate its memories of Japan's atrocities and justify its interpretation of history. Peter Hays Gries argues that a Chinese goal is to aggrandize China's suffering and century of humiliation, "presenting the Chinese case to the world."<sup>483</sup> From 2014 to 2016, China reached out to rival states and the global community for moral support, including overtures to South Korea. The CCP also used international venues to pressure Abe for an apology in his 70th anniversary statement and solidified world recognition of Beijing's account of the Nanjing Massacre.

Although South Korea and China are rivals in nearly every regard, they share a deep resentment of Japanese aggression in Asia. In January 2014, less than a month after Abe's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, China opened a Chinese-Korean memorial hall at Harbin railroad station to commemorate the history of Korean resistance against Japanese aggression.<sup>484</sup> Harbin Station is the site where Korean Anh Jung Geun shot Ito Hirobumi, a Japanese Imperial Army general and governor to Korea, after he stepped off a train from Korea in 1909. Executed by the Imperial Army, Anh Jung-Guen became a South Korean martyr and hero. Japanese officials protested the Harbin memorial and called Anh a terrorist, accusing China and Korea of "spreading groundless assertions" about Japan's past.<sup>485</sup> Defending the memorial, the Chinese foreign ministry described Anh as "an upholder of justice who fought against Japan's aggression" and accused Japan of memorializing terrorists buried at the Yasukuni Shrine.<sup>486</sup> In a July 2014 summit with

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<sup>483</sup> Gries, *China's New Nationalism*, 79.

<sup>484</sup> Przystup, "Past as Prologue."

<sup>485</sup> Ibid.

<sup>486</sup> Ibid.; Emily Rauhala, "104 Years Later, a Chinese Train Station Platform is Still the Site of Anti-Japanese Rancor," *Time*, January 30, 2014, <http://time.com/2609/104-years-later-a-chinese-train-station-platform-is-still-the-site-of-anti-japanese-rancor/>.

South Korean President Park Geun-hye, Xi spoke of the countries' common traumatic experiences and denounced the Japanese ravaging of Korea and China.<sup>487</sup>

In 2016, a monument was erected in Shanghai to honor Korean and Chinese women used as sex slaves by the Japanese army.<sup>488</sup> Chinese territorial disputes in the ECS emboldened similar Korean contentions in the Dokdo/Takashima Islands disputes.<sup>489</sup> Like China, South Korea maintains that these islands are historically Korean and Japanese control is an illegitimate artifact of Japan's colonial and military aggression.<sup>490</sup> China's strategy of corroboration and collaboration has resulted in regional leverage and endorsement of its ongoing suspicion and hostility toward Japan.<sup>491</sup>

The Chinese government sought international condemnation of Japan's wartime aggression to pressure Abe to recognize a deplorable past and apologize in his WWII 70th anniversary statement. In a March 2014 speech in Berlin, Xi fingered the Japanese for atrocities, recounting the Imperial Army's brutality in Nanjing and the death of 300,000 civilians whom China still mourns.<sup>492</sup> In 2015, Beijing sent invitations to "leaders of all relevant countries and international organizations" to commemorate the end of WWII, or the "Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression" and the "World Anti-Fascist War."<sup>493</sup> China fielded massive military parades, government-sanctioned television documentaries, and special exhibitions at war memorials and museums; presented the brutalities of Japan's occupation of Asia; and warned that the world would be watching Abe's 70th anniversary statement.<sup>494</sup> A

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<sup>487</sup> Przystup, "Searching for a Summit."

<sup>488</sup> JiJi, "Comfort Women Statues Unveiled at Shanghai University," *Japan Times*, October 22, 2016, [www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/10/22/national/comfort-women-statues-unveiled-shanghai-university/#.WHFtKLYrKCQ](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/10/22/national/comfort-women-statues-unveiled-shanghai-university/#.WHFtKLYrKCQ).

<sup>489</sup> Ted Carpenter, "Japan's Growing Quarrel with South Korea: Is China the Main Beneficiary?" *China-US Focus*, March 5, 2015, [www.chinausfocus.com/foreign-policy/japans-growing-quarrel-with-south-korea-is-china-the-main-beneficiary/](http://www.chinausfocus.com/foreign-policy/japans-growing-quarrel-with-south-korea-is-china-the-main-beneficiary/).

<sup>490</sup> Ibid.

<sup>491</sup> Przystup, "Searching for a Summit"; Przystup, "Past as Prologue."

<sup>492</sup> Przystup, "Past as Prologue."

<sup>493</sup> Przystup, "Gaining Traction"; Przystup, "To August 15—Toward September 3."

<sup>494</sup> Przystup, "To August 15—Toward September 3."

spokesman from the Chinese foreign ministry pressed Japan to “adopt a correct attitude, deeply reflect on its history of aggression . . . [and] win the trust of China and other Asian neighbors and the international community.”<sup>495</sup> Despite the official words of remorse and atonement in Abe’s anniversary remarks, China maintained its moral power by remaining dissatisfied due to a perceived lack of “heartfelt” remorse.<sup>496</sup> An article in the *Global Times* criticized Abe’s apology as meeting only the “minimum demands of China” and lacking sincere contrition.<sup>497</sup> Thus, China highlighted Japan’s historical past and lack of contrition in attempt to gain international validation of its historical grievances and pressure Abe into making an apology.

In October 2015, China triumphed in the debate over the Nanjing Massacre by gaining international credibility for China’s version of events. Despite Japanese protests, China pushed an initiative to add Chinese documents, including its official count of victims in the Nanjing Massacre, to the UNESCO Memory of the World Register. Japanese officials were outraged at the use of wartime history as a political tool to demean and embarrass present-day Japan. Tokyo threatened to withdraw financial support for UNESCO and petitioned to have the Nanjing Massacre removed from the historical registry, but these efforts failed. To capitalize on the occasion, the Chinese staged an exhibition at the Nanjing war-history museum and a grand ceremony on the 78th anniversary of the massacre on December 13, 2015. At the ceremony, the vice chairman of the standing committee of the National People’s Congress (NPC) clearly alluded to Japan in stating, “We have to resolutely oppose anyone who beautifies the war of aggression and any action that attempts to drive history backward.”<sup>498</sup> These events constituted another coup in demeaning and embarrassing China’s rival, promoting

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<sup>495</sup> Ibid.

<sup>496</sup> Ibid.

<sup>497</sup> Ibid.

<sup>498</sup> For this thesis, Nanjing and Nanking are used interchangeably. “Xi, Top Officials Absent as China Holds Nanking Massacre Ceremony,” *Japan Times*, December 13, 2015, [www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/12/13/national/history/xi-top-officials-absent-china-holds-nanking-massacre-ceremony/#.WHFYwLYrKCQ](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/12/13/national/history/xi-top-officials-absent-china-holds-nanking-massacre-ceremony/#.WHFYwLYrKCQ).



worldwide acceptance of the Chinese historical narrative, and nullifying Japan's moral credibility.<sup>499</sup>

*c. Chinese Assertiveness to “Contain” Japanese Militarism, 2014–2016*

Meanwhile, to exonerate maritime incursions in the ECS, Beijing continued to meld Chinese historical claims to the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands with accusations of present Japanese remilitarization. At an NPC session in March 2014, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi reaffirmed China's hard stance on sovereignty and history debates with Japan.<sup>500</sup> Chinese Premier Li Keqiang stated that China stood firm in its position on the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands and announced another double-digit defense budget expenditure of 12.2 percent, equivalent to \$132 billion U.S. dollars, to strengthen maritime assets.<sup>501</sup> China began to increase its maritime capabilities to assert sovereignty and to challenge Japanese assets in the ECS. Older armed frigates were modified to support coast guard law enforcement activities and three ship models, ranging from 2,300 tons to 4,500 tons, were refitted to provide a considerable edge over Japanese patrol ships, as depicted in Figure 15.<sup>502</sup> In 2015, a U.S. Department of Defense report on the Asian-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy identified PLAN capability as the strongest in the region, with over 300 combatant vessels and 200 law enforcement ships.<sup>503</sup> The 2016 comparisons of Chinese and Japanese patrol assets in Figures 16 and 17 show China's advantage in maritime patrol assets capable of challenging Japan in the ECS.<sup>504</sup> Figure 17 demonstrates a distinct Chinese advantage in the number of maritime assets available

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<sup>499</sup> Przystup, “Moving in the Right Direction”; Ayako Mie, “Japan Holding Back Payment to UNESCO,” *Japan Times*, October 14, 2016, [www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/10/14/national/japan-may-lose-chance-reform-unesco-failing-pay-dues/#.WHFa6LYrKCQ](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/10/14/national/japan-may-lose-chance-reform-unesco-failing-pay-dues/#.WHFa6LYrKCQ); “Xi, Top Officials Absent.”

<sup>500</sup> Przystup, “Past as Prologue.”

<sup>501</sup> Ibid.

<sup>502</sup> “East China Sea Tensions: Approaching a Slow Boil,” Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative and The Center for Strategic and International Studies, April 14, 2016, accessed January 5, 2017, <https://amti.csis.org/east-china-sea-tensions/>.

<sup>503</sup> Department of Defense, *Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy*, July 27, 2015, 12-13, [www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/NDAA%20A-P\\_Maritime\\_Security\\_Strategy-08142015-1300-FINALFORMAT.PDF](http://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/NDAA%20A-P_Maritime_Security_Strategy-08142015-1300-FINALFORMAT.PDF).

<sup>504</sup> “East China Sea Tensions: Approaching a Slow Boil.”

for patrols in the South and East China Seas, depicting the types and size of Chinese ships.<sup>505</sup> As depicted in Figure 15, The Kanjie WPS, Tuzhang WPS, and Jiang Wei I were recently modified as assets for maritime patrols.<sup>506</sup> China continued to use historical narratives and sovereignty claims to justify its ramping up of maritime capabilities, break Japan’s control of the disputed islands, and support Chinese national interests in the ECS.



This figure shows the rise in types and size of Chinese ships that reflect increasing maritime assets for deployment. Note that the Kanjie WPS, Tuzhang WPS, and Jiang Wei I were all recently modified as added assets for maritime patrols in the ECS.

Figure 15. China’s Coast Guard Assets and Modified Assets Patrolling Disputed Waters in the ECS<sup>507</sup>

<sup>505</sup> Department of Defense, *Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy*, 12-13.

<sup>506</sup> “East China Sea Tensions: Approaching a Slow Boil.”

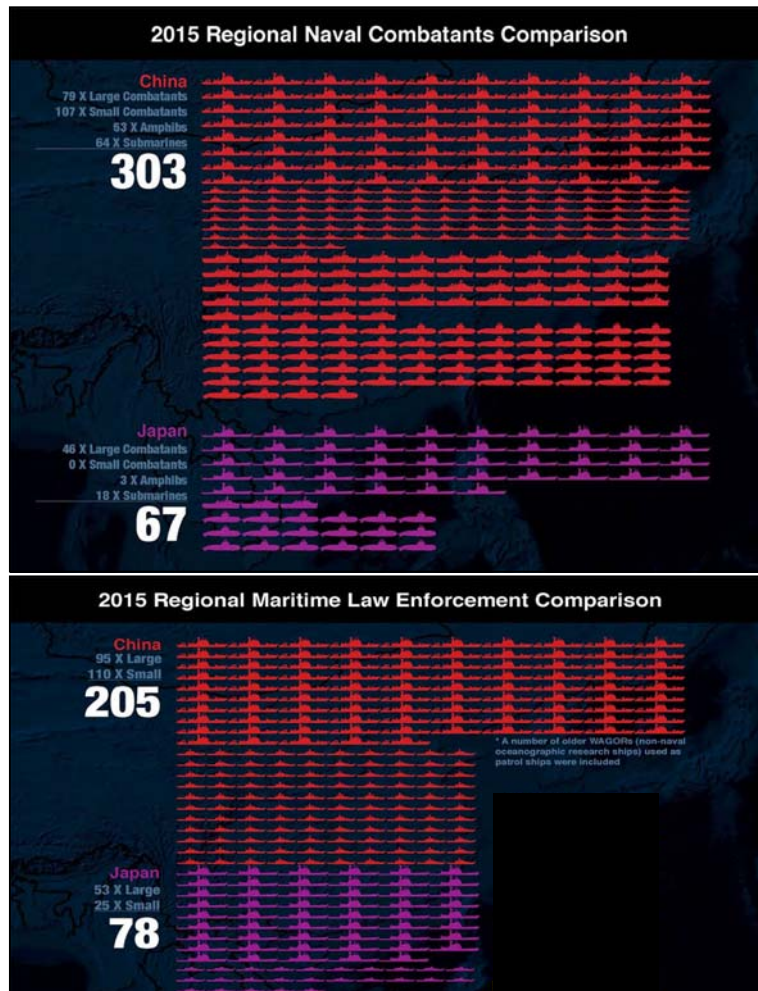
<sup>507</sup> “East China Sea Tensions: Approaching a Slow Boil.”



This is a comparison of coast guard ship inventories as of April 2016. China has a great advantage in terms of the size of patrol ships operating around the disputed islands, and is planning larger capabilities once the Haijing 2901 is operational.

Figure 16. Comparison of Chinese to Japanese Naval Assets Patrolling the Disputed Waters in the ECS<sup>508</sup>

<sup>508</sup> “East China Sea Tensions: Approaching a Slow Boil.”



This figure compares the naval combatant and maritime law enforcement inventories of Japan and China. As of April 2016, China enjoyed a significant maritime advantage over Japan in terms of number of assets available for deployment.

Figure 17. Comparative Representation of Regional Naval Combatant Vessels and Regional Maritime Law Enforcement Vessels<sup>509</sup>

From 2014 to 2016, routine Chinese maritime incursions in Japanese contiguous waters continued, and historical disputes were a perpetual friction. As presented in Figure 18, Chinese patrols began to venture farther into Japanese waters around the disputed islands.<sup>510</sup> A 2014 Japanese coast guard report noted that over 200 Chinese fishing boats

<sup>509</sup> Adapted from Department of Defense, *Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy*, 12-13.

<sup>510</sup> “East China Sea Tensions: Approaching a Slow Boil.”

were trespassing in territorial waters.<sup>511</sup> The report showed a 130 percent increase in illegal fishing, up from 88 in 2013—a steady rise since Japan nationalized the islands in 2012.<sup>512</sup> From 2015 to 2016, Chinese maritime patrols averaged 10 to 12 vessels per month.<sup>513</sup>

China's protests against Japan's amnesia also coincided with its increased maritime presence in the ECS. In August 2016, Beijing criticized Abe's newly appointed nationalistic defense minister, Inada Tomomi, after her inaugural speech denying Japan's past "invasion" of China.<sup>514</sup> China's ministry of defense accused Inada of "cover[ing] up Japan's history of aggression and challeng[ing] the international order by reviving militarism."<sup>515</sup> Shortly thereafter, and days from the commemoration of the end of WWII, there were 230–300 Chinese fishing trawlers, accompanied by 15 Chinese Coast Guard ships, operating near the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands.<sup>516</sup> Despite Japanese denouncement, the Chinese ambassador defended the flotilla as operating in Chinese waters. Near-daily incursions into Japanese contiguous waters became a norm for Chinese patrols that continues to this day. On occasion, increased Chinese maritime patrols in the ECS coincided with historical protests against Japan. As charted in Figure 18, incursions peaked after Japanese nationalization of the islands in 2012 and during Abe's first year in office.<sup>517</sup> Within two months of Abe's election, the CCG moved from peripheral waters to direct encirclement of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands.<sup>518</sup> China clearly

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<sup>511</sup> James J. Przystup, "Japan-China Relations: A Handshake at the Summit," *Center for Strategic and International Studies: Comparative Connections* 16, no. 3, (January 2015), [www.csis.org/programs/pacific-forum-csis/publications/comparative-connections/volume-16-2014/vol-16-no-3-january](http://www.csis.org/programs/pacific-forum-csis/publications/comparative-connections/volume-16-2014/vol-16-no-3-january).

<sup>512</sup> Ibid.

<sup>513</sup> "East China Sea Tensions: Approaching a Slow Boil."

<sup>514</sup> Przystup, "No Lack of Dialogue."

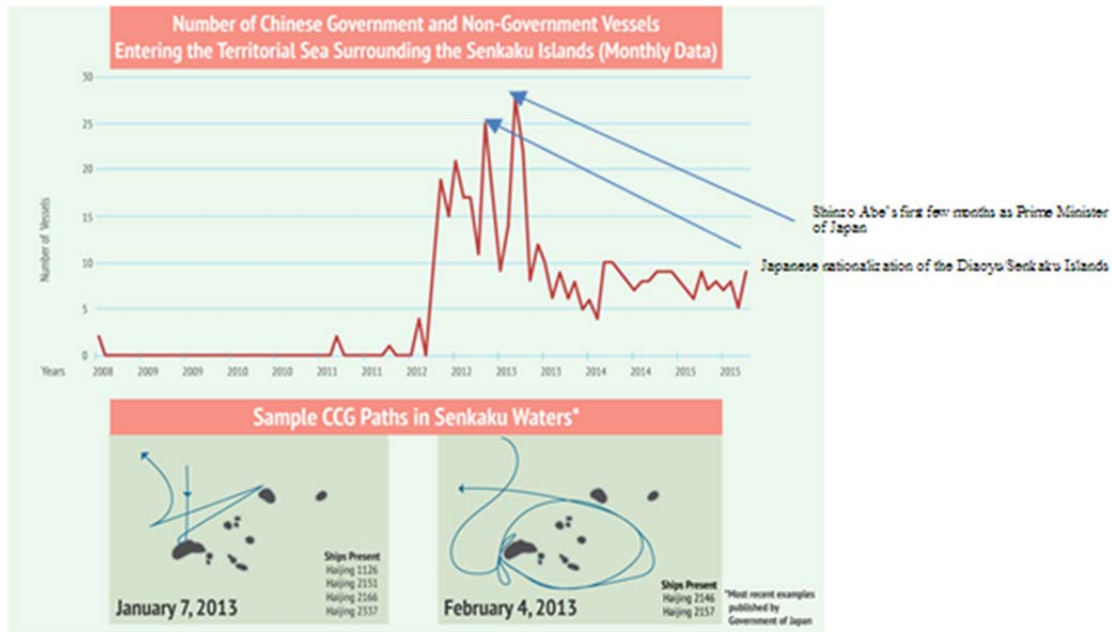
<sup>515</sup> Ibid.

<sup>516</sup> Ibid.; Ankit Panda, "East China Sea: Japan Protests as Chinese Coast Guard Vessels Enter Disputed Waters: Japan Says the Incursion is the 31st in the East China Sea this Year," *Diplomat*, November 7, 2016, <http://thediplomat.com/2016/11/east-china-sea-japan-protests-as-chinese-coast-guard-vessels-enter-disputed-waters/>.

<sup>517</sup> "East China Sea Tensions: Approaching a Slow Boil."

<sup>518</sup> Ibid.

used history as a coercive tactic to justify the continuing arc of increased Chinese maritime presence and aggression in the ECS.



This figure shows the monthly average number of Chinese government and nongovernment vessels patrolling the ECS from 2008 to 2015. The average increasing after the Japanese nationalization of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands in 2012. It peaks in 2013 after Prime Minister Abe is elected and tapers down to a steady average of between 5 and 10 ships per month from 2014 to 2016. The lower part of the figure shows an example of the Chinese Coast Guard (CCG) patrol paths around the disputed Islands. Note that after January 2013, CCG paths changed from just outside the islands to encircling them.

Figure 18. Average Chinese Vessels per Month, 2008–2015, and Patrol Courses<sup>519</sup>

From 2014 to 2016, Chinese air incursions significantly increased as both China and Japan refused to yield over air boundaries above the ECS. In May 2014, a near midair occurred over the ECS when two Chinese SU-27 fighter jets had a dangerously close encounter with two JASDF aircraft observing a joint Sino-Russian maritime exercise.<sup>520</sup> Another near midair crisis occurred in June 2014, when two Chinese and two

<sup>519</sup> Adapted from “East China Sea Tensions: Approaching a Slow Boil.”

<sup>520</sup> Przysup, “Searching for a Summit.”

JASDF aircraft flew within two meters of each other.<sup>521</sup> Both countries blamed the other for the close intercept and claimed obstruction of airspace.<sup>522</sup> Figure 19 shows a rise in Japanese scrambles, from 98 in 2010 to 571 in 2015.<sup>523</sup> A March 5, 2015, article in the *National Post* highlighted Japan's daily attempts to intercept Chinese planes.<sup>524</sup> A September 2015 article in the *Diplomat* reported that the JASDF scrambled its aircraft 117 times during the third quarter of 2015.<sup>525</sup> In the first three months of 2016, the Japanese air force reported 198 flights to intercept Chinese planes—twice the tally at the same time the previous year.<sup>526</sup> In September 2016, days after the Japanese minister of defense announced a policy of possible engagement in the South China Sea, the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) deployed massive airpower through the Miyako Strait near Okinawa and China's claimed ADIZ in the ECS. Although the Japanese fighter jets intercepted only eight Chinese aircraft, China asserted that over 40 PLAAF aircraft, including H-6K bombers, SU-30 fighters, and tanker aircraft, were involved.<sup>527</sup> Beijing further asserted that squadrons would continue to conduct patrols, airborne reconnaissance, and practice attacks on surface targets to "safeguard national sovereignty, the country's security, and [to] maintain peaceful development."<sup>528</sup> Similar to the maritime incursions, these policies demonstrated Chinese resolve against Japanese air power in the ECS and reassertion of its historical claims to the disputed waters.

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<sup>521</sup> Ibid.

<sup>522</sup> Ibid.

<sup>523</sup> "East China Sea Tensions: Approaching a Slow Boil."

<sup>524</sup> Isabel Reynolds, "Fighter Pilots at Japanese Air Base have to Scramble Daily to Ward Off Chinese Incursions," *National Post*, March 5, 2015, <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/world/fighter-pilots-at-japanese-air-base-have-to-scramble-daily-to-ward-off-chinese-incursions>.

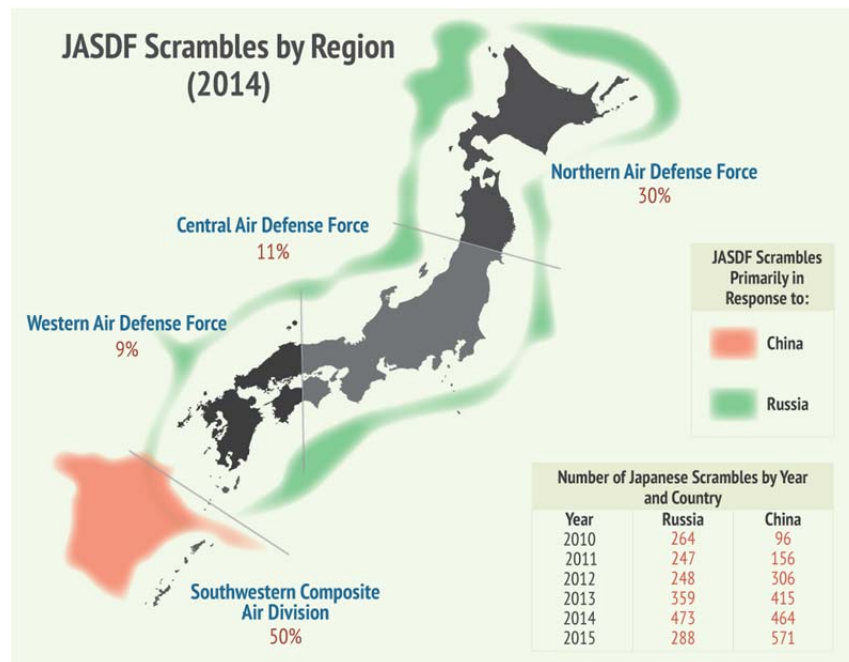
<sup>525</sup> Shannon Tiezzi, "China Tests Japan's Resolve over East China Sea," *Diplomat*, October 21, 2015, <http://thediplomat.com/2015/10/china-tests-japans-resolve-over-east-china-sea/>.

<sup>526</sup> Guy Taylor, "Japan Fighter Jet 'Scrambles' Double in Response to China," *Washington Times*, April 22, 2016, [www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/apr/22/japan-fighter-jet-scrambles-double-response-china/](http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/apr/22/japan-fighter-jet-scrambles-double-response-china/).

<sup>527</sup> Jesse Johnson, "Japan Scrambles Jets as China Warplanes Fly Through Okinawa Strait," *Japan Times*, September 26, 2016, [www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/09/26/national/politics-diplomacy/fighter-scrambled-near-okinawa-china-air-force-planes-pass-miyako-strait/#.WKu5KxIrL-Y](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/09/26/national/politics-diplomacy/fighter-scrambled-near-okinawa-china-air-force-planes-pass-miyako-strait/#.WKu5KxIrL-Y).

<sup>528</sup> This was from Shen Jinke, a spokesman from the People's Liberation Army Air Force. J. Johnson, "Japan Scrambles Jets."





This depicts an increasing number of JASDF air scrambles against Chinese and Russian assets in 2014. Shown in red on the map, over half these flights were concentrated in the ECS around the disputed islands. Japan's Southwestern Composite Air Division handled 50 percent of the overall scrambles, a five-fold increase from 2010–2015. With the exception of 2014, Japanese air scrambles against Russia have remained mostly flat.

Figure 19. JASDF Scrambles against Chinese and Russian Air Assets<sup>529</sup>

By 2015, the Beijing's persistent complaints over Tokyo's amnesia and militarism began to wear thin, as shown by China's failure to contain Japan's right-wing nationalist ambitions and reinterpretation of the peace constitution. In May 2014, a spokesman from the Chinese foreign ministry accused Abe of "taking perverse action on historical issues and pressing ahead with constitutional amendment and military expansion under the cloak of proactive pacifism."<sup>530</sup> But perversely, the relentless browbeating, along with China's own military expansion and aggression in the ECS, encouraged Japan to embrace nationalism to counter China's rise. In 2015, over Chinese denunciation, Abe won approval from the diet to reinterpret Article 9 as allowing Japan to legally engage in

<sup>529</sup> "East China Sea Tensions: Approaching a Slow Boil."

<sup>530</sup> Przystup, "Searching for a Summit."



“collective self-defense,” or a limited use of arms to support allies.<sup>531</sup> China’s exploitation of historical grievances did little to gain concessions from Japan or contain Japan’s nationalistic policies and alleged revival of militarism. However, China’s coercive use of history was rather aimed at justifying China’s own military rise and aggression in the ECS leading to an inflamed security dilemma in the region, at the expense of deteriorating Sino-Japanese relations.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

Evidence in this chapter strongly supports that Chinese elites use historical grievances as a strategic tool of foreign policy to justify assertive actions to contain Japan’s power and have considerable influence on negative Sino-Japanese relations. An analysis of China’s promulgation of history at the highest levels of government during the three periods of discord proves that Chinese elites use China’s anti-Japanese sentiments and the country’s historic trauma, and sometimes Japanese guilt of its past, to their advantage to support or maintain its power advantage over Japan, gain concessions from Japanese leaders, or justify actions that support national interests. When China feels less threatened by Japanese hawkish ambitions, history is rarely ever an issue and bilateral cooperation easily transpires.

The first period of discord from 1989 to 1998 had three main occasions where the Chinese central authority used history in an attempt to gain the relative balance of power over Japan: the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands Disputes in the 1990s, the protest of changing U.S.-Japan security guidelines in 1996 and 1999, and Jiang Zemin’s demands for an official apology during his visit to Tokyo in 1998. The Diaoyu/Senkaku disputes garnered concessions of ODA from Japan and allowed the CCP to use the public’s demands to strengthen sovereignty claims in the ECS. Although China protested the strengthening U.S.-Japan security alliance after the third Taiwan Strait missile crisis, Japan refused to change its security policies to address China’s objections. However, China reacted strongly and used history to justify its increasing patrols and military

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<sup>531</sup> Matt Ford, “Japan Curtails its Pacifist Stance,” *Atlantic*, September 19, 2015, [www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/09/japan-pacifism-article-nine/406318/](http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/09/japan-pacifism-article-nine/406318/).

excursions in the ECS to demonstrate its resolve to challenge Japan's rising military power under the U.S. security umbrella. When used, China's exploitation of historical grievances seemed to play to China's advantage against Japan until Jiang Zemin's visit in 1998, which confirmed Japanese suspicions of the CCP's use of history as a tool of coercion to gain a moral upper hand against Japan. All of these events during this time demonstrate that Beijing's use of history to contain Japanese power ambitions had a moderate contribution to explaining the negative Sino-Japanese relations.

In the second period from 2003 to 2006, Chinese elites played a less aggressive role in initiating historical grievances but instead reacted to historical and political activists and the anger that resulted from anti-Japanese public opinion. Hence, Beijing's use of history in the balance of power was a relatively weak explanation of the downturn of bilateral relations. Implicit endorsement of massive demonstrations allowed Beijing to use the public's demands to garner concessions from Japan. This was seen in Beijing's promulgation of Japan's past history and historical amnesia and its endorsement of the violent anti-Japanese demonstrations to justify its veto against Japan's bid for a permanent seat at the UNSC. However, China's public demanded that Beijing act more aggressively against Japan. Beijing seemed to tolerate Koizumi's initial visits to the Yasukuni Shrine and continually warned Japan that the Chinese public had little tolerance for such insults. Beijing also aggressively linked the Yasukuni Shrine to the disputed islands as historical issues that demonstrate revisionist policies and a rise of Japanese militarism. As a result, Beijing began to increasingly justify its escalated actions and strengthen its claims in the ECS as a way to challenge Japanese militarism.

In the third period from 2010 to 2012, aside from the 2010 and 2012 public demonstrations over the ongoing Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute, the Chinese central authority had a significantly aggressive policy in using historical grievances against Japan. Hence during this time, the use of history to gain the advantage in the balance of power strongly contributed to the downturn of bilateral relations. Although China's historical complaints did little to garner Japanese concessions, they provided justification for China to expand its military agenda and aggressively challenge Japan's administrative control in the ECS. Japan and China would continually challenge each other in the ECS,

staying near the brink of conflict with daily air and maritime intercepts. China even went as far as to claim an ADIZ over the disputed waters, causing international concern over the safety of international aircraft. During this time, China solicited the support of and acknowledgment by the court of international opinion regarding China's interpretation of history in exaggerating Japan's cruel past. Hence, the CCP played a central role in using historical grievances to support national objectives to gain the upper hand in the balance of power against Japan and strongly contributed to the downturn of relations during this time.

## V. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

This thesis analyzed two hypotheses to explain how history has affected Sino-Japanese relations since the beginning of normalization of diplomatic relations from 1972 to 2016. The first hypothesis explored China's deeply embedded resentment and collective memories of past trauma with Japan in shaping bilateral relations. Evidence strongly supported the notion that provocative Japanese actions reignite anti-Japanese sentiments that demand (1) Beijing act more aggressively in its foreign policy with Japan and (2) Japan take actions to pacify domestic unrest or acquiesce to CCP demands, which contribute negatively to bilateral relations. The second hypothesis explored China's use of history to maximize relative power, suppress or contain rival Japan, or secure state interests, and how this use has impacted the nature of the countries' relations. Evidence also strongly supported when China feels threatened by Japanese aspirations to gain influence in the region or challenge China's national security interests, China highlights Japan's past aggression and present lack of remorse to contain Japanese ambitions and gain a power advantage over Japan.

While both hypotheses can explain the characterization of the relationship, they did so in varying degrees within each period of discord. However, collective memory had the overall stronger contribution to negative Sino-Japanese relations than the balance of power as it accounted for the most discordant Sino-Japanese period. In the first period (1989–1999), both collective remembrance and public opinion and balance of power played a near equal, yet moderate, role in explaining the downturn of Sino-Japanese relations. In the second period (2003–2006), collective remembrance played a much stronger role than the balance of power as Beijing's use of history was mainly in reaction to the rise of anti-Japanese sentiments in China. Sino-Japanese relations were at their lowest during this second period when collective memory and public opinion played the stronger role in shaping bilateral ties. However, things were reversed in the third period (2010–2016), when the balance of power overwhelmingly played a more significant role in explaining negative relations making this the second lowest period of bilateral ties. Thus, when collective memory was the driver of ties, Beijing's use of history to gain an

advantage in the balance of power was weak. When the balance of power was the primary driver of bilateral relations, collective memory played a more supporting role.

One might ask why then is collective memory at its weakest influence during the third period (2010-2016), especially after 2012, when Japanese provocations were at their highest levels and further exacerbated by one of Japan's most nationalistic and offensive prime ministers to date—Shinzo Abe? Hence at face value, the events after 2012 refute the explanation proposed by the hypothesis that collective memories are spurred and instigated by controversial Japanese actions that drive foreign policy. However, perhaps collective memory's influence on shaping bilateral relations was more discreet and not so visible during this time as anti-Japanese sentiments did not disappear but played a more inconspicuous role. In part to satiate the public's demands for a hardened foreign policy against Japan, Beijing escalated its assertion in challenging Japan, restoring or maintaining the public's faith in the CCP's ability to contain supposed Japanese militarism. Hence quelling any desires for the public to resurrect its traumatic collective memories or force the hand of the CCP to react. In proactively satiating the public's need to escalate historical disputes, the CCP was also able to avoid any potential costly action of suppressing its public if sentiments got out of hand as it did in 2005 and 2012. In part, the government proactively confronted Japan on behalf of the people. Hence supporting the argument that collective memory still played a significant role in shaping bilateral relations even when the balance of power seemed like the dominant factor.

This chapter summarizes the findings from both hypotheses explored in chapters III and IV in explaining how history has played a role in Sino-Japanese relations and offers policy implications and recommendations for both Japan and the United States. This chapter concludes that a combination of both explanations of collective memory and balance of power explain the nature of bilateral relations, but, to varying degrees within each divided time period discussed in Chapter II (1972–1989, 1989–1999, 1999–2003, 2003–2006, 2006–2010, 2010–2016). During periods of cooperation (1972–1989, 1999–2003, 2006–2010) historical issues were rarely a problem as Japan took precautions to avoid offensive actions or stir anti-Japanese hatred. Thus, the Chinese public found no stimulus to activate anti-Japanese sentiments, nor did Beijing feel threatened by Japan

enough to call attention to history to contain Japanese power ambitions in Asia. However, during periods of discord (1989–1999, 2003–2006, 2010–2016) provocative Japanese actions resurrected traumatic collective memories and put historical grievances at the forefront of foreign policy, which threatened to rip apart bilateral relations.

## **A. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The following section analyzes the findings from both hypotheses within each period of discord. The findings reveal several key points. First, both collective remembrance and public opinion and balance of power explain the periods of Sino-Japanese discord. Neither variable should be independently studied to explain the nature of the relationship. Second, when collective remembrance was the greater driving factor, balance of power played a less significant role in explaining the downturn in relations. The opposite was observed when balance of power was the driving factor, collective memory played a more supporting role. Last, collective remembrance played the overall stronger role in shaping bilateral relations and accounted for the worst period of Sino-Japanese discord.

### **1. Hypothesis I: Collective Remembrance and Public Opinion**

Although collective remembrance and anti-Japanese public opinion remained, to a varying degree, throughout all three periods of discord, it contributed only moderately to the downturn of relations in the first period, contributed greatly in the second period, and contributed little to moderately in the third period. Chapter III explored the power of China's collective remembrance of national trauma and how it contributed to a downturn in Sino-Japanese relations during three main periods of discord (1989–2000, 2003–2006, 2010–2016). This chapter focused on the influence of Chinese public opinion on both Chinese and Japanese domestic and foreign policy. Ironically, government propaganda fueled anti-Japanese sentiments and an education campaign drove Beijing to take action to harden its foreign policy measures even if it was not in the best interest of CCP policies. In some cases, Beijing had actively suppressed public uprisings to maintain CCP control over its public. Chinese public opinion can also influence Japan's domestic and foreign policies by encouraging Japan to address historical grievances or make

concessions to quell Chinese domestic uprisings. The rise of public opinion and anti-Japanese sentiments both hindered and supported Beijing's diplomacy with Japan. Although anti-Japanese opinion has been a major force since Japan's invasion of China in the 19th century, the three periods of discord restored its prominence, ranging from a weak to a heavy role in affecting negative Sino-Japanese relations.

**a. *Period of Discord: 1989–1999***

Collective remembrance and public opinion was a moderately strong variable in driving the downturn of bilateral relations during the first period of discord. International structural changes resulting from the end of the Cold War along with China's need to relegitimize the CCP through a massive education campaign after the Tiananmen Square incident drove Beijing's policies. Anti-Japanese sentiments were not as prevalent as in the second period, partly because the CCP was still sensitive to the rise of public opinion during the Tiananmen Square incident and its threat to regime legitimacy and also because the education campaign was in still its infancy and the Chinese elites still favored the preservation of economic and monetary policies with Japan to boost China's economy. However, the public continued to demand justice and correct past wrongs, as seen in the initiatives taken by historical and political activists to claim sovereignty over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. The Senkaku/Diaoyu dispute in 1996 exemplified Chinese nationalists' taking action with Beijing's coercion or endorsement. In the same period, the student uprisings forced the Chinese elites to ask Hashimoto to take action to quell Chinese protests and deescalate bilateral tensions. However, Chinese public opinion was still muted by the CCP's policies and desires to be continuing beneficiaries of Japan's ODA. Hence, Chinese public opinion played only a moderate role in explaining bilateral conflicts during this first period of discord.

**b. *Period of Discord: 2003–2006***

Collective remembrance played an even more significant role in the downturn of bilateral relations during the second period. By 2003, the patriotic education campaign

was in its eighth year and no longer a campaign, as the teachings and revisions of “red” propaganda<sup>532</sup> became fully adopted as everyday societal norms. Meanwhile, the introduction of the Internet in 2003 boosted anti-Japanese sentiments in the Chinese public. Because of the increased number of public protests and public uprisings over perceived Japanese slights, collective memory and public opinion were very strong variables in driving the downturn of bilateral relations by forcing the Chinese elites to ask Japan to take action to satisfy its public. In addition, Chinese elites had to take even more aggressive action against Japan to suppress China’s public. The 2005 domestic protests represented the climax of Chinese public opinion in that the Chinese public took the law into their own hands and conducted violent protests, demanding action by both the Japanese and Chinese governments. Riot after riot and protest after protest were all highlighted in the international community as Beijing continually warned Japan against taking action that might rile the public. Hence, this time period saw the greatest influence of Chinese public opinion on the Chinese and Japanese governments and played a heavy hand in dictating foreign policy and contributing to the downturn of bilateral relations.

*c. Period of Discord: 2010–2016*

Other than the 2010 and 2012 Diaoyu/Senkaku Disputes, anti-Japanese public opinion was relatively calm during this period, despite controversial Japanese actions under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Abe has been one of the most nationalistic Japanese prime ministers to date; his right-wing controversial nationalist actions rival that of former Prime Minister Koizumi. Although Abe has only visited the Yasukuni Shrine once, compared to Koizumi who visited the shrine every year he was in office, Abe has led Japan to the brink of open conflict in the ECS and pushed one of the most militaristic,

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<sup>532</sup> “Red” propaganda refers to the propaganda campaigns of the Chinese Communist Party. Red symbolizes a main color of the Chinese Communist Party and for revolution. Red is also among one of the main colors in Chinese society, especially during Chinese New Year, as it represents happiness, joy, and luck. Malcolm Moore, “China Launches ‘Red Culture’ Drive,” *Telegraph*, May 3, 2011, [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/8489484/China-launches-Red-Culture-drive.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/8489484/China-launches-Red-Culture-drive.html); “The Art is Red,” *Economist*, December 14, 2014, [www.economist.com/news/china/21636783-propaganda-art-enjoying-new-lease-life-art-red](http://www.economist.com/news/china/21636783-propaganda-art-enjoying-new-lease-life-art-red); “Symbolism of Colors, Associations of The Five Elements in Chinese Beliefs and Feng Shui,” Nations Online, accessed February 25, 2017, [www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/Chinese\\_Customs/colours.htm](http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/Chinese_Customs/colours.htm).



nationalistic, and right-wing agendas to date. It does help that Abe has only visited the Yasukuni Shrine once, as it is a major flashpoint in bilateral relations and the most obvious trigger of Chinese resentment over past Japanese aggression. However, mass demonstrations as seen before 2012 were either absent or not reported since, despite continuing controversial actions by Japan—especially under Abe. Surprisingly, the Chinese public was relatively quiet despite Abe’s offenses, which doesn’t support the argument that provocative actions spur anti-Japanese sentiments and contribute to negative relations. It is not that the Chinese people have forgotten their national narrative or suppressed their collective memory during this time; it is quite the contrary as the Chinese people still harbor strong resentment over Japanese aggression in Asia, which remains as a stinging memory for the Chinese public. The Chinese people still conduct their own forms of protest and it has become a common norm for them to show their continuing resentment. Perhaps Internet sites have given the public a satisfying outlet to vent their anti-Japanese sentiments without having to resort to costly and time consuming riots or public demonstrations. However, as discussed in Chapter IV, the Chinese elites have taken a more aggressive role in challenging Japan’s rising militarism and right-wing agenda. Perhaps a more assertive Japan policy by the government has been more effective in showing the public that the CCP—not the people—is the competent and legitimate authority to handle the rise of Japanese militarism. Thus, Beijing’s hardened stance has satisfied political and historical activists and satiated any potential hunger for anti-Japanese rioting among the public. Regardless, Chinese public opinion played only weak to moderate contribution to explaining negative bilateral relations during this time, as the CCP has increased its aggression in challenging Japan.

## **2. Hypothesis II: Government Use and Relative Power**

As demonstrated in Chapter IV, the government has taken advantage of China’s historical trauma with Japan to serve realpolitik objectives at home and abroad. However, Beijing’s use of historical grievances only contributed moderately to the downturn of bilateral relations in the first period, was weak to moderate in the second period, and was strong in the third period. Domestic unrest from the Tiananmen Square incident along with the structural changes in the international balance of power after the Cold War only

encouraged China and Japan to renew competition in East Asia despite their economic interdependency. Hence to maintain a relative balance of power over Japan and to contain Japan's ability challenge China, the CCP awakened historical grievances to serve national interests, justify military expansion, and gain the upper moral hand.

***a. Period of Discord: 1989–1999***

During this time, China's use of history against Japan was moderate—mainly to support domestic public protest against Japanese nationalistic rhetoric and, on occasion, to justify deployment of military assets to defend national interests. This was seen in the Diaoyu/Senkaku disputes in the 1990s, which were instigated by the Chinese public (as discussed in chapter III) allowing Beijing to justify sending two ballistic submarines to defend its national interests in the ECS. Beijing also minimally increased its patrols in the ECS to protest the revised U.S.-Japanese security guidelines and Japan's adoption of the UNCLOS-endorsed EEZ. During this time, China began to use the ECS as a form of protest against its historical disputes with Japan. In later periods, the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands became synonymous with and forever linked with Japanese militarism and nationalism. For China, the islands are a symbol of injustice and bitter resentment of Japan's wartime aggression in China—an unresolved part of China's century of humiliation. However, Beijing overplayed its history card when Jiang Zemin tried to force a formal apology from Tokyo. This allowed Japan to call China's bluff to sincerely forgive Japan's past and verified China's perpetual resentments and use of history as a bludgeon to continually gain concessions. Hence Jiang's actions to garner an apology revealed a weakness in overusing history as a tool of diplomacy against Japan. A comparison of both hypotheses discussed in this thesis reveals that both public opinion and the Chinese government equally contributed to the downturn of bilateral relations during this first period.

***b. Period of Discord: 2003–2006***

The rise of public opinion during this time overshadowed Beijing's use of history as a tool of power to further national interests. On several occasions, Beijing just reacted to the anti-Japanese riots and domestic uprisings by acting more aggressively against Japan.

As mentioned, the Diaoyu/Senkaku disputes were synonymous with historical grievances—namely Koizumi’s continual visits to the Yasukuni Shrine. However, historical and political Chinese activists initiated these disputes, not the Chinese central authority, which merely reacted to the demands of the Chinese public. Even Beijing’s eventual veto of Japan’s bid for a permanent seat on the UNSC was only fully revealed after millions of protestors demanded it. On occasion, Beijing’s use of history augmented the demands of the public, which the CCP used to support national interests. However, during this time, public opinion mainly drove Beijing’s policies against Japan and contributed more to the downturn of bilateral relations, while the balance of power played a weaker role.

*c. Period of Discord: 2010–2016*

Since 2012, Beijing’s use of history has played a significantly greater role in contributing to the downturn of bilateral relations than the collective memory of its citizens. Public opinion only played a significant factor during the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands disputes in 2010 and 2012, when it amplified Beijing’s justification for maritime escalation in the ECS. However, Beijing has become more proactive in using its historical grievances to blunt any anticipated power gains by Japan. Even during the first period of cooperation, Beijing had the foresight to keep its guard against a relatively subtle rise of Japanese ambitions to regain influence and power in the region. A rearmed Japan that is capable of challenging China has become more of a reality during this time—especially under Prime Minister Abe.

After Japan nationalized the islands in 2012, and to challenge the leadership of Shinzo Abe, China has increasingly used history to justify significant escalation in defending territorial disputes in the ECS. Beijing has used history to justify yearly double-digit defense spending increases to support military modernization programs to counter supposed Japanese militarism and sovereignty claims in the ECS. As noted in Chapter IV, Chinese maritime presence has been continual in recent years as Japanese air scrambles have occurred on a near-daily basis, reaching record Cold War levels. Both countries have escalated military actions and reactions in the ECS, causing a significant

security dilemma in the region. Meanwhile, Beijing has petitioned the international community to garner support for its interpretation of historical wartime events with Japan. Beijing's success in entering the Nanjing Massacre in the UNESCO world registry and joint historical ventures with rivals like South Korea gave international legitimization of its historical grievances and world sympathy for its past. Even the United States lectured Shinzo Abe for visiting the shrine in 2012 and unnecessarily causing a rise of Sino-Japanese tensions—an action never taken before by Japan's strongest ally.<sup>533</sup>

For the last few decades, the Chinese government has called attention to past evils to gain concessions from Tokyo, contain Japanese ambitions for power, dampen Japan's efforts to restore its reputation, and justify the pursuit of Chinese self-interests. However, in recent years, this strategy has failed to contain Japan's agenda. Although China's use of history has been successful in justifying the expansion of its domestic policies in the name of national interests, it has failed to contain supposed Japanese militarism. Rather, China's use of history has provoked a backlash from Japan, especially under Abe, to challenge China's rise and ambitions in Asia. Both China and Japan have taken hardened positions against one another, constantly showing the use of military assets and alliances to defend national interests. Perhaps this backlash is a sign that Beijing's promulgation of history is losing its effectiveness to garner concessions from or contain Japanese ambitions for power. Japan has retaliated against China's "beating" by strengthening its nationalistic posture and military and exacerbating the security dilemma in the region. Under Abe, Japan is on a rising nationalistic trajectory that rejects China's historical narratives, and Japan is increasingly willing to use force to settle disputes with China. In claiming a right to the redress of historical injustices, China has rationalized increases in its own defense spending and aggression in the ECS. While Chinese finger-pointing remains a powerful tool in guaranteeing the upper hand in Sino-Japanese relations, increasingly there is a price to pay in terms of cooperative bilateral relations, conflict resolution, and the risk of overplaying—and thus voiding—the history card. Regardless,

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<sup>533</sup> George Nishiyama, "Abe Visit to Controversial Japanese Shrine Draws Rare U.S. Criticism," *Wall Street Journal*, December 26, 2013, [www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304483804579281103015121712](http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304483804579281103015121712).

China will still use warnings of Japanese militarism and renewed assertiveness in the ECS as justification to expand its own power to challenge Japan.

## **B. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES AND JAPAN**

This section provides four main policy implications and/or recommendations for U.S. and Japanese planners: (1) to recognize the power of historical grievances, (2) to understand the CCP and the Chinese public's responses to the Japanese can be mutually reinforcing or limited depending on the CCP's goals, (3) to consider making foreign policy moves quietly to avoid overreactions by the Chinese, and (4) to address grievances to blunt China's political use of history as leverage.

### **1. Recognize the Power of Historical Grievances**

Policy makers must understand the origins of China's history and its historical grievances from its century of humiliation. Chinese foreign policy is rooted in its domestic policies and paradoxical national narrative as both "victim" and "victor," and the desire to never again be in such a state of weakness that other nations can threaten its sovereignty. Hence, emotional grievances must be addressed to honor the remembrance of history while ensuring that the government saves face before its people. The United States' and Japan's acknowledgment of historical grievances will make China more willing to conduct further negotiations. History will continue to play a role in Chinese foreign policy, which was seen in pressuring Japanese prime ministers to refrain from visiting the Yasukuni Shrine before high-level diplomacy can continue, or immediately addressing the people's demands to release historical and political activists from Japanese incarceration to prevent further complications to arise. Nevertheless, the people influence both domestic and foreign policy by pressuring Beijing to address historical grievances in a more aggressive way or to encourage Japanese leaders to apologize and change their domestic policies to recognize Chinese history. Unsurprising, the first order of business between China and the United States under the new Trump administration was U.S. recognition of the "one China" policy regarding Taiwan, which is still seen as a part of China's century of humiliation and in which China still seeks to reunite Taiwan under

PRC rule to fully restore what was wrongfully taken from its sovereignty by imperialist powers.<sup>534</sup> Hence China's historical traumatic narrative will be a major driver of its foreign policy.

## **2. Understand the CCP and the Chinese Public's Responses to the Japanese Can Be Mutually Reinforcing or Limited, Depending on CCP's Goals**

When events regarding the history issue arises, the CCP and the Chinese public usually respond to both the Japanese and each other. Thus, anti-Japanese sentiments and periods of negative Sino-Japanese relations are influenced by a combination of elite-driven objectives and domestic collective memories and sentiments. However, in many cases, I would caution that the public's influence on the CCP is limited because the central authoritarian government has the final say and dictates what and how far public opinion will be ultimately tolerated—especially if those public interests threaten, criticize, or embarrass the CCP or lead to uncontrollable chaos. This was seen in the CCP's suppression of the public at the end of the 2005 riots or Beijing's more strict control over the protests during the 2012 riots. However, more importantly, the CCP's control over and repression of its public and the media did more to quell Chinese mobilization and escalation of protests than Japanese concessions did. Unless the Chinese central government permitted the outbreak of domestic protests and anti-Japanese sentiments, most public protests were either never advertised or were suppressed in favor of national interests. Thus, the Chinese central authority permits a larger escalation of protest and mobilization only when it serves its interests. In this case, The Chinese government can limit the impact that Chinese public opinion has on both the CCP and the Japanese elites in shaping foreign policy. Chinese elites can use the public to shape foreign policy, as seen during the protests of 2005 when the CCP blamed the Japanese for causing Chinese uprisings and encouraged the Japanese elites to take action to quell the protests while also using the excuse of the public uprisings to justify their veto of Japan's

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<sup>534</sup> Mark Lander and Michael Forsythe, "Trump Tells Xi Jinping U.S. Will Honor 'One China' Policy," *New York Times*, February 9, 2017, [www.nytimes.com/2017/02/09/world/asia/donald-trump-china-xi-jinping-letter.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/09/world/asia/donald-trump-china-xi-jinping-letter.html?_r=0).

request at the United Nations. Hence, Chinese lawmakers allow the public to vent or cause disorder in their country as long as the public response does not exceed a certain threshold that would weaken the regime's legitimacy or significantly hurt the CCP's foreign policy objectives. Although the rise of Chinese public opinion can, in itself, shape China's or Japan's foreign policy, U.S. and Japanese policymakers must not dismiss the potential for the CCP to use public opinion to further its own agenda by shaping another country's policy under the cloak of uncontrollable or volatile public opinion.

### **3. Consider Making Foreign Policy Moves Quietly to Avoid Overreactions by the Chinese**

The United States and Japan should consider being less overt in their policies toward China, even though China will undoubtedly continue to use history as a tool of leverage. The announcement of the U.S. pivot or rebalance of the Pacific only exacerbated tensions with China and strengthened China's suspicion of the U.S.-Japan alliance. China remains sensitive of any perceived slights by Western powers, and it could interpret this rebalance and increased presence of the United States as a familiar encroachment on its sovereignty as once seen during its century of humiliation—a genuine sentiment resulting from China's traumatic collective memories. Thus, China could turn its historical grievances against the United States as well. China is already suspicious of the U.S.-Japan security alliance and is annoyed with United States' resolve to support Japan in the defense of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands.<sup>535</sup> Hence, China will continue to use its historical grievances in any way it can, either to garner international support to weaken or lessen the moral aptitude of Japan and the United States or to defend illegal remnants of past imperialism and colonization in the ECS. As China increases its military and defense capabilities commensurate to its economic status, it will become more emboldened to challenge any perceived slights that could potentially threaten its sovereignty. Thus, the United States and Japan should be prepared for China's continual use of history to justify

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<sup>535</sup> Julie Hirschfield Davis and Peter Baker, "In Welcoming Shinzo Abe, Trump Affirms U.S. Commitment to Defending Japan," *New York Times*, February 10, 2017, [www.nytimes.com/2017/02/10/world/asia/trump-shinzo-abe-meeting.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/10/world/asia/trump-shinzo-abe-meeting.html); Brad Lendon, "Mattis: US Will Defend Japanese Islands Claimed by China," CNN, February 4, 2017, [www.cnn.com/2017/02/03/asia/us-defense-secretary-mattis-japan-visit/](http://www.cnn.com/2017/02/03/asia/us-defense-secretary-mattis-japan-visit/).

both its domestic and foreign policies—China is far from giving up using its history card to gain the moral upper hand or as leverage to justify the defense of national interests.

#### **4. Address Grievances to Blunt China's Political Use as Leverage**

Instead of criticizing China's complaints against Japan, Japan can take actions to lessen China's historical leverage by addressing all issues immediately to restore bilateral positive relations. For example, if China unearths another Japanese chemical weapon that causes harm or if Japanese businesses are accused of behaving indecently while visiting China, Japan should not be predisposed to dismiss Chinese concerns but should immediately take a conciliatory attitude and redress the issues to minimize predicted Chinese criticisms. In regard to the Yasukuni Shrine, China will use this as moral leverage as proof of supposed Japanese militarism. The Japanese prime minister should avoid visits to the Yasukuni Shrine as it has now become a political tool used by China. By not visiting the shrine, Japan's prime ministers take away China's ability to use or demean the sacred shrine for political gain, and Japan can preserve the shrine as sacred place of worship for the bereaved Japanese families who lost loved ones during the war—not as a place of hate and revisionism. As seen in China's "new thinking," Japan could take the moral high ground and adopt a "new thinking" on China to help improve relations. Government endorsement of cultural exchange programs and a campaign of positive Sino-Japanese relations could cut through some of the bitterness of history in the public sector. Abe could also approach China, South Korea, and other Asian countries for another look at the possibility of having regional joint historical textbooks, as previously done in 2006. In any case, Japan and China can explore ways to improve bilateral relations, while saving face in the international community without seeming weak to their domestic constituents.

In conclusion, Sino-Japanese relations are challenged by both opportunities and obstructions. The return of friendly and cooperative Sino-Japanese relations will be difficult to achieve if both sides cannot come to agreement with the interpretation of history and its use in dictating domestic policies of nationalism, self-identity, and legitimacy of government. Although the history issue is not at the center of all Sino-



Japanese conflict, it is usually an underlying or related factor. Thus, seeking resolution through joint bilateral efforts would result in only positive benefits to both sides of the Sino-Japanese relationship.

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